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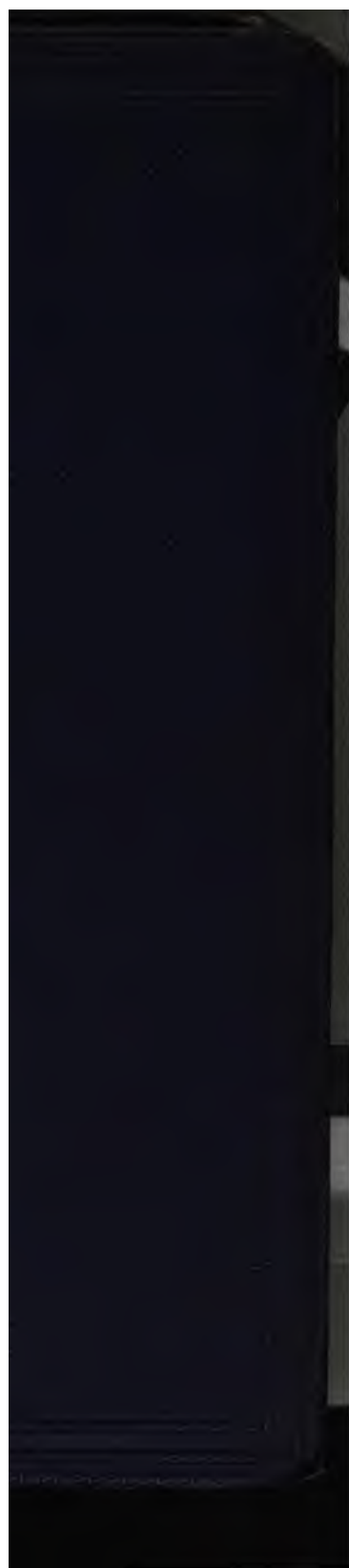
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ESSAYS
IN DEFENCE OF WOMEN.

LONDON:
ROBSON AND SON, GREAT NORTHERN PRINTING WORKS,
PANCREAS ROAD, N.W.

S. G. Mubling

ESSAYS
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IN

DEFENCE OF WOMEN.

"It is, methinks, a low and degrading idea of the Sex to consider them merely as objects of sight. This is abridging them of their natural extent of power. How much nobler is the contemplation of beauty heightened by virtue, and commanding our esteem and love while it draws our observation!"—SPECTATOR, *April 7th, 1711.*

LONDON:
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18 CATHERINE ST. STRAND.

1868.

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PREFACE.



ALTHOUGH these Essays are not a formal defence of women, who indeed need none such from me or anybody, I think it will be found that their substance justifies their title. In them, women are neither contemptuously flattered nor malignantly sneered at; and as it has of late been so much the fashion—an unmanly and unworthy one, surely?—to use them as a common joke and a mere matter for irreverent and in some instances indecent entertainment, I have thought that a less metrical treatment of the subject would not be unwelcome. Therefore I have republished these contributions to a Conservative organ,*

* *The Imperial Review.*

where, I am happy to think, they would never have obtained insertion had they not been marked by an appreciation of that most conservative of all conceivable principles — a jealous and undeviating regard for the honour of the female sex. I hope women will think them accurate in observation. I hope men will think them chivalrous in spirit.

October 19th, 1868.





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BEAUTY IS POWER.

I.

ASOMEWHAT keen discussion was occasioned, about a dozen years ago, by Lord Lytton putting into the mouth of Randall Leslie in *My Novel*, and making it serve as the mainspring of all that ambitious young gentleman's actions, the familiar dictum "Knowledge is Power." Did Lord Bacon distinctly make any such assertion? And if he did, was the assertion true? We are not going to reopen a question, then quite hotly enough debated. We prefer to give scope to a fresh debate, by roundly declaring that, whether knowledge be power or not, Beauty is.

People not unfrequently betray an invincible dislike to acknowledging that certain things are, so long as they feel a moral conviction that they ought not to be. If it be true that the wish is often father

to the thought, aversion is equally often the parent of incredulity. Now a great many persons have the strongest repugnance to conceding any force to what they are accustomed to call accidental advantages. Beauty, it is asserted, is nothing more than an accident. It cannot be earned by hard labour, purchased by serious sacrifice, or be in any way bestowed as the reward of merit. It is not even heritable. Like the rain of heaven, it falls to the lot of the just and the unjust alike, and in larger proportion, it is alleged, to the latter than to the former. It will be seen that we are treating of Beauty proper, beauty which would be beauty in all ages, and in that sense a joy for ever; not that other so-called Beauty, that loathsome counterfeit to be had of Madame Rachel, purchased at the hairdresser's for seven-and-sixpence, or compressed into a little box of pigments fetched from the Rue de la Paix. The Beauty of which we speak is, we freely allow, as complete an instance of accident as anything that can be named. Aristotle is popularly supposed to lay down certain rules by which its existence may be linked with design; but if the illustrious philosopher can fairly be charged with anything so foolish, it is certain that no portion of his doctrine is more thoroughly exploded. We make no defence. Beauty is an accident, but it is Power all the same. We have no wish to ride off on the pretence that birth,

wealth, talent, are accidents, and that these also exercise a fair amount of influence in the spheres where they are met with. We do not claim, indeed we refuse to accept, any such sophistical apology for the power of Beauty. Birth, wealth, talent, the moment they come into play as social forces, represent very considerable effort, present or past, on the part of somebody or other. A man is born of importance, because some ancestor took infinite trouble to make himself so. Wealth is usually most powerful in the hands of him who accumulates it, and will soon be of not the slightest value in the hands of him who does not exert himself to keep its substance together, and to spend its interest with judgment. Talent without education, which implies effort, is just as barren of result as a rich soil would be in which nobody sowed any sort of seed. But Beauty is as potent as the sunshine without any human aid, sways our mundane affairs with just as little traceable mechanism or visible attempt as the moon governs the tides, and can no more be commanded than we can count on length of days or can add a cubit to our stature. Its existence is the strongest argument in favour of the terrible doctrine of predestination that we ever heard of. The possession of it unquestionably predestines certain people to the enjoyment of much bliss in this world, and the want of it equally entails upon certain others much

private weeping and a fair amount of public gnashing of teeth. If these assertions appear to those who, in the interests of what they conceive to be morality, would like to deny any special power to Beauty, a cynical confession of the existence of a great and cruel wrong, we cannot help it. They may call it what they please, provided they do not try to deny a very living and active fact.

The importance of Beauty is acknowledged in a very early stage of existence. "Such a lovely baby!" is the first statement, whether it be true or false, which politeness and good feeling expect everybody to make respecting it to its mother, father, nurse, and all concerned. Should the assertion be borne out by the fact, the phrase becomes a household word, cannot be repeated too often, and in English society completely ousts the weather as a proper subject for general conversation. Should it be nothing more than a good-natured lie, demanded, like the assertion that you are not at home when you are comfortably ensconced in the back drawing-room, by the exigencies of the occasion, it is allowed by degrees to shade off into something approaching to truth. After the mother has come downstairs, or the monthly nurse been dismissed, or the reluctant husband at length awoke to the fact that he is not the only father in the township, somebody will, perhaps, venture to say that he—for it is always a

brute of a man who first breaks the ice of a hard-and-fast falsehood—he does not quite think, eh? that it is such a *lovely* baby. It is a “splendid” baby, a great, strong, healthy baby, no doubt, and awfully like its father; but can it properly be called lovely? At first the sceptic is cried down. But great is truth, and the fact that it is a plain baby—a *very* plain baby—after all, prevails. But the fact, though tardily admitted, is regarded as a decided misfortune. It is looked upon as so much loss of power. Neither is it admitted without some expectation of future redress. Hope springs eternal in the human breast, especially in the maternal one; and comfort very shortly comes in the original discovery that “babies change so.” A fresh tribute, be it observed, to the omnipotence of Beauty. If it be really beautiful at first, its beauty is accepted as a happy augury that it will continue such with advancing years. If it be not, the absence of this influential quality is set down as a pledge that there will be a change for the better. That there will possibly be a change for the worse enters the head of no person of decent feeling. *Absit omen!* A couple of ribald bachelors may furtively grin and nudge each other in the ribs, as they together descend the hospitable staircase; and whilst one whispers, “Isn’t it ugly?” the other may hiss back, “Yes; and, by Jove! won’t it be ugly when it grows

up?" This kind of obscenity is just the sort of thing that might be expected from a pair of untamed savages who never had a baby. But even their heartless strictures do but serve still further to justify our position. It is their malevolent habit to chuckle over the misfortune of their fellow-creatures. They, too, recognise that, even in the basinet, Beauty is Power, and they gloat over the impotence and misery in store for the ugly little victim that, unconscious of its fate, is playing its fantastic tricks before some angelic female relations, who, deluded by false hopes, are in the seventh heaven of delight, and weeping for excess of joy. Moreover, the fact that parents with very ugly offspring are themselves blind to the intense ugliness for which they are to a certain extent, though most unjustly, held accountable, does but prove how terrible an accurate knowledge of the truth would be to them. Thoughtful Nature has guarded against this calamity by prejudicing their eyes against the complete perception of a phenomenon painfully evident to unbiassed vision. How thoroughly, indeed, how excessively, she has taken this precaution, may be gathered from the authentic narrative of that great historian of human nature, M. La Fontaine. The poor owl, he tells us, lost all her young ones by her partial, though not wilfully false, description of their external charms to the eagle. It is im-

possible to believe that she would not have described them to be thoroughly as repulsive as they really were, had she been aware of their repulsiveness, since her only object was to save them from being eaten by her voracious friend. So that Nature herself, in implanting this dull instinct in the parental heart, pays her valuable tribute to the doctrine we have laid down, that *Beauty is Power*. "To be weak is to be miserable," says Lord Byron. Nature, equally aware of the truth of the proposition, kindly cheats the mother in her weakest moments of all, and buoys her up with the sense of power which accrues from the belief that her new-born is "a perfect picture."

But, it may be urged, beautiful or not beautiful, babies surely cannot be credited with the possession of power? True, they cannot; but, like constitutional sovereigns, they can confer it. A mother with a lovely baby has far more importance, in other people's eyes at least, than a mother with an ugly one has. But the time very quickly arrives when they assume more direct prerogatives. Before the mid teens are reached, Beauty may perhaps be regarded in the light only of an infant Hercules; but it is a Hercules all the same. Let an ugly child venture to be as naughty as a beautiful one, and it will soon be made to rue the day that it so grievously mistook its position. We doubt if the heel end of

the slipper is ever administered, or if administered, administered *bonâ fide*, to the really lovely child. Like Campbell's "shattered spear" in the hands of Sarmatia, the unshattered broom "drops from the nerveless grasp" of the venal castigator, as he feels how very human a thing it is to forgive a little creature so divinely fascinating. Who leads the way to dessert? The eldest, the cleverest, the best, the most industrious? Not in the least—the prettiest. Who sits near to papa, or to the most illustrious stranger present? Little golden curls, we may be sure. Who gets the bigger half of the orange? The most beautiful, just as of old it got the whole of the apple. Who is put upon the table, and walks all the way down it from top to bottom, among the fruit and the leaves, and the burnished goblets? Who but the flower of the flock, protected against the precious crockery, like Una against the terrible lions, only by its beauty! And what if half-a-dozen glasses, brand-new from Dobson and Pearce, are tumbled over by its oscillating frock? Beauty did it. What may not beauty do? We should like to see Maggie with the red hair, or poor Katie with the snub nose, break so much as a coarse Staffordshire porringer. Arise, O nurse, and glut your ire! Who plays the part of ambassador, pleads for a holiday, or asks for the entire schoolroom to be let off the arithmetic lesson? And when the little ones are at

play among themselves, how runs the formula at "Forfeits"? "Bow to the wittiest, kneel to the prettiest, and kiss the one you love best." Bowing is an easy matter, and kisses galore there are and always will be. But kneeling! There's the rub! Kneeling is a sign of submission, an acknowledgment of power and suzerainty. And if these things be in the nursery, what is likely to be law in the big, big world?

II.

FOR a brief while we have left Beauty standing—for which we profoundly apologise—on the verge of sweet sixteen, and at the threshold of what arrogates to itself, in modern phraseology, the exclusive name of Society. We have, however, the consolation of knowing that, despite our rudeness, Beauty is never kept waiting very long. Sour old maids, and even excellent mothers whose daughters are not gifted with those charms which alone could make them our present concern, may feebly protest that it is positively indecent to let a girl "come out" whilst she is still little more than a child. But precocity is one of the consequences and accompaniments of Beauty; and walking boldly up to the barriers which profess to admit none save those bent on business, it is at once let in by the officious

janitors, even though its as yet unbusiness-like character is legibly written on its tender, inquisitive face. Now and then it will occur that a parent, either supernaturally endowed with an independent and self-supporting love of propriety, or frightened into a regard for it by the scowls of neighbours, checks the impatient desire of her charge for premature visions of the promised land, and sturdily refuses for her those invitations which, on account of her loveliness, can already be had for the asking, or even without. But the wisdom of this maternal restriction may be doubted. It is at best but a sort of closing the safety-valve; and, like that operation, only quickens the pace, if it does nothing more. Beauty, once thoroughly alive to its power, is sure to exercise it in some way or other. Hence, from sixteen to eighteen, when Beauty is "kept back," its path is strewn with the bones of smaller and meaner victims, who on the score of clannish feeling ought to have been spared their terrible fate. This is the sickly season, when male cousins are killed off by the dozen, and promotion is fearfully rapid in the family ranks. It is all the fault of the elders, who will not allow the beautiful destroyer at once to arise and go forth and spoil the Egyptians. Beauty cannot help its ravages; and these propitiatory sacrifices of undergraduate relations serve but to whet, and in no degree to glut, its irrepressible appetite for ruin. Easy-going people

who have escaped this peculiar peril incident to the closing years of boyhood invariably affect to treat its griefs with levity, and aver that calf-love is as trivial a matter as an early attack of scarlatina or the measles. "He has no children!" exclaims Macduff; and many a poor old gentleman, if he would only tell the truth when he hears these precocious sorrows of the heart so glibly explained away, would groan aloud, "He never had a pretty cousin." Depend upon it that the moorland has been terribly dreary, and the shore preternaturally barren, for more than the poet, all by reason of "Amy, mine no more!" Yet who is going to turn accuser? Beauty, like the king, can do no wrong. It is the family council, its responsible adviser, which should be arraigned. Unfortunately, it is beyond the reach of impeachment. Beauty, as just as it possibly can be, visits the sins of parents upon their children, and punishes its aunts, who have all the while been abetting its imprisonment at home, by ruining the college prospects of their favourite sons and making their lives a burden to them, at least for a time.

But let the most severe relations in the world do their worst, Beauty cannot be "kept back" very long. To Beauty, as to Norval, Heaven soon grants what a sire denies. It, too, has heard of battles, and longs to be in the thick of them. And now it is that its marvellous power becomes so manifest. Every field

is open to it, and no arena, however professedly exclusive, bars its doors to the intruder. Society lifts up its gates at the approach of Beauty; and Beauty has only to say, "These are in my train," to obtain admission for others who could not possibly obtain it on any other pretence. Many an ambitious mother, whose husband's pedigree and antecedents are not esteemed in the highest circles to be perfectly satisfactory, but whose struggles in the social world have been as ingenious and unremitting as those of her lord in the industrial, without being quite so successful, has at length the ineffable happiness of seeing herself borne on to the highest pinnacle of her feminine desires by the glamour and renown of her daughter's loveliness. Her husband may have made half the railways in Europe, and all the railways in Asia; may have been a member of the Commons' House for a fair number of years; and, nevertheless, have failed to procure for her a share of the world's honours altogether in keeping with those so prodigally lavished on himself. But radiant eighteen comes, and, like a star of the first magnitude, it carries its maternal satellite along with it, through the very loftiest and bluest spaces of the fashionable empyrean. What power was ever equal to that of getting an old, ugly, vulgar, pushing, and hitherto disappointed woman, into "the very best society"? Yet Beauty—beauty of the very highest order—does this.

It is magical, and may well be spoken of as gifted with a wand. Venus has properly no other title but that of Victrix. When is she ever anything else? Turn from mythology to political economy, and the point for which we contend remains equally clear. What is the definition, in that accurate science, of the value of a thing? Its purchasing power. What is there that Beauty cannot purchase? Let it be born lowly, and it shall order itself a dukedom, and will not improbably get it. Of course, the tone of the market varies from time to time. Mercantile affairs, we all know, are subject to oscillation. But Beauty can always buy something like the thing it wants. If the beautiful beggar-maid cannot always invest in a king, the beautiful *bourgeoise* need never despair, at least, of obtaining some lordling or other. Should Beauty be fairly enough born, but disagreeably poor, Beauty may drive into Lombard-street, or even walk thither, and take her pick of the *jeunesse dorée* of its celebrated bank-parlours. And even if Beauty be born a fool—and ill-natured people pretend that such is often Beauty's fate—its purchasing power is so unlimited that should it, against all probability, condescend to bid for the brains of the most rising middle-aged barrister, of the most eloquent preacher, or of the most promising young diplomat in the service, there will be no manner of difficulty in making it a bargain. Thus its purchasing power

would seem to be commensurate with all desirable commodities. But between it and all other things which enjoy purchasing power there is this remarkable difference. In the language of political economy, they are exchanged for the commodity which they command. But Beauty makes no exchange. It buys everything, so to speak, without paying for it. It purchases birth and wealth, and when it has purchased these two excellent things, everybody actually declares aloud that it is more beautiful than ever.

We must not omit to point out another peculiarity in the power of Beauty, or we might not be thought to have fully demonstrated our case. Beauty is Power in all times and under all circumstances, whereas every other attribute which sophists may pretend to be likewise power can lay claim to be such in a very limited sense, and only under certain favourable conditions. The power of Beauty is unconditioned—it is absolute—it is universal. All other power is, at best, but particular. Let us take, for example, the instance already alluded to, as embodied in the dictum, Knowledge is Power. Knowledge is power in a debating-society, or in an æsthetic tea-room; but what is its power at a ball or in a street-row? As Johnson says, “Go into the square and give one man a lecture on morality and the other a shilling, and see which will respect you

the most." Bigotry is power at Exeter Hall, and even Ignorance is power at a meeting of the Reform League. Has not America had its "know-nothings;" and was not power their very being's end and aim? But Beauty is power everywhere and always. You may see it interrupt a lecturer, disconcert a preacher, and make an orator forget the thread of his argument. It disturbs the saint at his prayers, the poet at his sonnet, and the accountant labouring at his sum-total. It has even happened that Section D of the "British Association" was as good as closed for the day by the unexpected entrance of Beauty. President, Vice-President, Secretary, were in just as bad a case as Paolo Malatesta and Francesca when they closed the book and read no further on. The English Legislature, thereby once more proving its claim to be considered the most practical assembly in the world, whilst admitting Beauty to its debates, and thus testifying to its power, bears still stronger witness to the truth of our proposition, by refusing to allow it to be seen. The perforated screen in front of the ladies' gallery might properly carry the inscription, in Gothic letters, "Beauty is Power." Just as it is unconstitutional for the Sovereign to be present at the debates in the Lower House, lest his presence might overawe or corrupt freedom of speech, so the presence of Beauty, and for a similar reason, is practically excluded. Its smiles, like those of the

monarch, are of too acknowledged a potency to be allowed unrestrained admission to an assembly whose complete immunity from venal motives is notorious, and which, like Cæsar's wife, even in the moment of reformation, must not even be suspected.

We have not dwelt upon the relative powerlessness of ugliness, or even of plainness; firstly, because the subject is disagreeable, or, in other words, because what we should be obliged to say thereon would be painfully true; and secondly, because we think that our position is too strong, even on the positive side, to need any corroboration from what may be called negative arguments. We only appeal to the plain people to look into their own hearts, and say if we have exaggerated the power of Beauty. They themselves, and they know it, make concessions to the beautiful, which they would never dream of making to their ill-favoured fellows in distress. This deference to Beauty, this slavish submission to it, may be right or may be wrong, but it is universal. If it is not everybody's nature to practise it, all we can say is, that everybody has caught the habit. There is a positive contention in the bowing down before this tremendous visible divinity. It is omnipotent, and as ruthless as Fate. We even try to propitiate it, though nine times out of ten we know we shall fail. "Did you ever see such an ugly fellow?" said one man to another. The unfortunate individual

thus severely commented on happened to overhear the remark, and unwisely remonstrated: "And if I am ugly," said he, "it is not my fault." "Yes, it is," was the retort; "it's your confounded ignorance." The poor wretch was covered with confusion, and slunk away with never a word of exculpation against the unjust and inconsequent charge. To plain women nobody could speak so brutally; but are they not thought of somewhat in this fashion? Might they not almost be malefactors, to see the way in which they are treated? And the real malefactors, the beautiful destroyers who go about seeking whom they may devour, how do they come off at the hands of that big packed jury, Society at large? "Not guilty. Upon our oaths, not guilty." Or, if guilty, "Guilty, with extenuating circumstances." What are the extenuating circumstances? You have them ready-made in a couple of lines, now of a very respectable old age:

"If to her lot some female errors fall,
Look on her face and you'll forget 'em all."





ON PROPOSING.

THERE is, perhaps, no matter of universal human interest about which so little is known as about Proposals. This is all the more singular, seeing that the materials for knowledge ought to be so very abundant. All knowledge nowadays ought to be scientific, and all scientific knowledge, deserving the name, is based upon copious facts. As nearly every man who arrives at years of indiscretion proposes once in his life, and many men propose much oftener, it follows, that if there were anything like an enlightened and generous desire to promote the cause of this particular science, it would soon take high rank among those to which is conceded the flattering title of "exact." Having once obtained our Science of Proposing, we could then proceed to construct the Art of Proposing, and could lay down with unerring accuracy fixed rules for the guidance of mankind. When to propose, Where to propose, and How to propose, would, of course, furnish the three main

divisions of the subject. It is quite clear, from the vague ideas which prevail on these points, and from the melancholy mishaps which daily befall adventurers in the art, that we are far from having attained so desirable a consummation. Indeed, it is not too much to say, that the unhappy being who still has to propose is just as badly off as if nobody had ever proposed before. It would be vain for him to seek instruction before venturing on the awful expedition. Advice, of course, he could readily meet with; for officious charlatans never fail to present themselves at every important crisis in life, and quackery abounds in proportion as ignorance prevails. But sound, reliable directions are wholly wanting. Abyssinia is not a more dark and unknown land than the one which countless generations have trodden, one after another, with varied fortunes, but with like taciturnity.

The fact is, we fear, that proposing is regarded as so disagreeable an episode in a man's career, that there exists a silent, but thoroughly well-understood and universal, conspiracy to suppress the particulars, and hush the matter up altogether. One evening you perceive, by unmistakable symptoms, that a man has completely lost his reason, and is what, in the familiar language of these unclassical times, is termed "spooney." The next day you hear that he is "engaged." What has occurred in the interval?

Nobody knows. No one can tell. Something has taken place, it is quite clear, since there is no effect without a cause; and in this case a most interesting and portentous effect has been brought about. But how? The man has "proposed." Yes; but when did he propose—where did he propose—and how? What did he say? How did he go about it? We cannot accept the conventional answer as a satisfactory explanation. "Proposed" means nothing, tells us nothing, and is a mere subterfuge. The man was not at all ashamed to be frantically enamoured overnight, though the whole room was secretly laughing at him; and to-day he seems to be rather proud than otherwise of the result of some exploit performed by him in the interval. We endeavour to pierce the mystery. In vain! Universal darkness covers all! The chrysalis of an hour ago is now a full-fledged butterfly; yet no one saw the wings expand, and no one can explain to us the process by which they did so. No doubt the end is so glorious that it would justify any means used to compass it. What the means have been, even the victor will not inform us. We are driven to the conclusion that they must have been somewhat ignominious.

It might be thought that novels would shed a flood of light upon the subject. Their theme is love; and, by all the canons of criticism, they must

close with many marriages, just as much as tragedies must end amid profuse slaughter. But it is not too much to say that novels are either perfectly silent upon this curious point, or avowedly misleading. In novels, as in actual life, we see some great hero, who is gradually becoming enslaved by the attractions of some blameless heroine, emerge from a shady avenue, or a moonlight stroll, or a secluded ride, with his prize upon his arm, or at least remarkably close to his side; and we are asked to imagine what has taken place since they were last seen together, and to fill up the blank according to our pleasure. The novelists—and they are very many—who pursue this plan can at least plead that they are drawing from real life. It is quite as absurd to suppose that they would be admitted to the mysteries of that obscure quarter of an hour, as that anybody else would; and if they tell their readers anything of what has occurred in the interval, they can only be practising upon their credulity. Some romancers have courage enough to do so—as, indeed, they have courage enough for anything. Complete ignorance is proverbially confident; and that particular class of writers who are so ready with self-evolved information about the inhabitants of Belgravia are not likely to hesitate about admitting us to the not less, though in their case not more, obscure incidents and phraseology of lovers' proposals. But, just as

ordinary people, really acquainted with the manners and customs of the upper classes, wholly repudiate the description to be found of them in Mudie's most favourite volumes, so is there a universal consensus, that the account given in the same quarters of proposals of marriage is purely fictitious, and utterly unlike what actually occurs in real life. As everybody is agreed upon this point, it is clear that we may rely upon their asseverations. Unfortunately, this does not help us much. Far from telling us how proposals are made, it merely informs us that they are not made in the manner some people allege. Everybody is ready to disown the portrait of a lover's behaviour at the critical but dark moment of his fate, as drawn by popular artists; but nobody is willing to paint a common experience for the consent and approbation of all. Some novelists, it is true, have once or twice really attempted to raise the veil, and professed to expose their hero to public gaze at the very moment that he is making his declaration of love; but in these instances it has always been manifest that the author did not think much of his hero, and, moreover, did not much care what the reader thought of him. Such pictures have, accordingly, been accepted, for the most part, rather as caricatures than as faithful representations; and if the exclamation, "How very natural!" has rewarded the enterprising but cruel limner of life behind the

scenes, it has generally been accompanied with the remark—"But how very absurd!" Of course, it is just possible that the ridiculous spectacles to which we refer approach nearer to the truth, even as regards the vast majority of amorous mankind, than mankind is willing to allow. But, if such be the case, we almost prefer the more romantic school of writers, who never allow their heroes to propose to young ladies without allusion to the stars—worship, boundless as the ocean—and the more than Promethean misery they will undergo if their too, too bold aspirations be not blest with consent. If the noblest study of mankind be man, surely it is not well to study him in his least noble moments. When a poor fellow is made a fool of in a realistic story, we feel inclined to cry out, "Let us throw a pall over these horrors." It is positively painful to think for a moment that humanity can sink so low. We fly with a feeling of relief to the volumes where a man and a brother pours out the long pent-up passion of his soul in superb periods, whose cadences are delicious if the grammar is imperfect. If the picture is not true, we console ourselves with the reflection that it ought to be. Remember Schiller's glorious words: "Man has lost his dignity, but Art has saved it. Truth still lives in fiction, and from the copy the original will be restored." The language almost reads like a positive command to lovers to study the

most high-flown love-scenes of the best romance-writers who venture upon this dangerous and mysterious ground, and then to go and do likewise.

We have a suspicion that Englishmen make their proposals of marriage more awkwardly than any other race of creatures under the sun. Hence, there is a notion amongst us—most unfounded, of course—that proposals are not unfrequently made for them by the very objects of their affections. This, we feel quite sure, is a gross slander upon both the parties concerned. Still, it serves to show the public estimate of the average masculine capacity for “speaking out” when the time really arrives for doing so; and it may, at any rate, safely be said that there are no two things most Englishmen hold in greater dread than having to make a speech, and having to make a downright declaration of their affections, and extort a confession of reciprocity. A sense of the ridiculous cramps and hampers them. A false feeling of shame, we suppose, holds them back, and they are too honest to go about afterwards and brag of the magnificent way in which they passed through the ordeal. But just as when the very worst and most unintelligible public speech ends, amid the loud cheers of indulgent spectators, everybody feels that no harm has been done, and that the ungrammatical orator has rather distinguished himself than otherwise; so, if a proposal

made in seclusion is only followed up by public signs of acceptance, no one is, or perhaps should be, too curious to inquire how the result has been brought about. Women are certainly not dead to the charms of eloquence, but we must conclude that eloquence, on certain occasions at least, is not the most persuasive of weapons with them. Perhaps they agree with Demosthenes, that the first, second, and third chief requisites of eloquence are, "Action, action, action!" And it is just possible that it is in this way proposals are mostly made, time and space annihilated, and lovers made happy.





ON BEING REFUSED.

THE precocity of the infant mind is a frequent and familiar subject of social discourse, and many are the anecdotes narrated illustrative of this well-known characteristic. We have a trivial one to add to the already existing stock, which will serve as a convenient starting-point for what we have to say on a much more grave and important topic.

"Mamma," said an English boy of seven, whose education abroad had made his speech a little polyglot, "I don't think, when I grow up, that I shall ever propose to a lady."

"Why not, my dear?" was the natural maternal inquiry.

"Because, mamma," said the lad, with sad solemnity, "if she were to refuse me, I should die of the *vergogna*"—Anglicé, the shame.

We all know what precise value to set upon young people's ideas of personal dignity, and it is exceedingly probable that the precocious young gen-

tleman, who gave utterance to the above sentiment, has grown up to be refused several times, and yet to be alive and well at this present moment. He will probably have learnt, since then, that "nothing venture, nothing win," is both a more useful and a more becoming frame of mind than that which "fears its fate too much," to risk an ugly fall. He may, very likely, also have discovered that falls, even from heaven, result, at worst, like that of Vulcan, only in a wounded limb, and perhaps a slight limp ever afterwards. Still, though the *vergogna* is not so fatal to existence as our little friend imagined, there can be no doubt but that the shame is sufficiently great to impose silence on the sufferers. Our gravest troubles are invariably those we never mention; and men are proverbially shy of referring to defeats, the worst feature of which is that they will not bear explanation. They are as jealous of telling of their rejection as Viola was of telling her love, and let concealment play the worm's part in their cankered bosoms. Yet, of course, somebody must know of it. Firstly, there is the cruel damsel herself; and though we have heard of a young lady positively refusing even to be coaxed into the admission that she had been proposed to by a rejected suitor, there is reason to suppose that instances of such supernatural female reticence are rare. Ordinarily, the fact becomes domestic property; and as it is not usually regarded as particu-

larly dishonouring to the family, we must not be surprised if a few strangers without the gates are admitted into what is called strict confidence—than which, it may be remarked, there is perhaps no looser phrase in existence. The wings of the wind would probably best express the mechanism by which the interesting piece of intelligence is carried all over the town or the county, as the case may happen. Such, at least, it seems to be to the imagination of the poor shrinking wretch, who shuffles along, thinking that the very lamp-posts know, and the very guide-posts expound, the disaster. He almost dreads to see it announced among the latest news, in the evening paper; and it possibly might be, were it deemed of sufficient importance. His vanity does not permit him to soothe his terror with this last wholesome reflection.

Those who have the greatest happiness of the greatest number profoundly at heart, may be disposed to discuss the practicability of a scheme which seems worthy of consideration, and which, if extensively carried out, would save a great deal of unnecessary suffering. Fully half the misery of men who have just been refused springs from the fact that they are haunted by doubts as to who is acquainted with their misfortune, and who is not. Would it not be much better that everybody should know it, and that the principals concerned should know that everybody

knows it? We are proposing no new-fangled remedy. We simply suggest the extended application of a very old one, which is popularly believed to meet every known evil. What is the panacea for every imaginable ill, political, religious, and social? Everybody will be prepared with the reply, "Publicity." Exactly. Let every refusal at once be made public. It will be understood that we do not suggest this course in the interests of the public, but in those of the patients. As we have seen, somebody—and, in fact, a great many somebodies—must necessarily become acquainted with what has occurred, and the mischief, along with the consequent pain, is, that it is impossible to tell who is acquainted with it and who is not. Not only does this ignorance inflict superfluous torture on the poor creatures, but it makes them magnify the importance of the revelation, and therefore the extent of their mishap. Complete publicity would put a stop to all this. What is everybody's affair is notoriously nobody's affair. Nobody would take the trouble to tell what everybody knew already. The real joy of a gossip's existence is to reveal the unknown, not to discuss what is already common property. What so little talked about as the "Latest Telegrams"? If they are even so much as mentioned to-day, they are wholly forgotten to-morrow. Let there be "Latest Refusals" as well, and we may rest assured that they will then be treated with an equal

amount of indifference. Men who now go about like criminals, afraid of discovery and exposure, would then be able to hold up their heads, and look everybody in the face without wincing. Just as people, at present, when conversation slightly flags, give it a fresh start by asking, "Have you seen that King Theodore has murdered five thousand more of his soldiers?"—so they might then put an end to an ugly pause by the casual remark, "Ho, by the way, old fellow, I see, by the Latest Refusals, that Olympia Brown has refused you." Indeed, a man would then himself be able to take the bull by the horns, and usher his entrance into a drawing-room with the frank, cheery announcement, "Well, you see by this morning's *Times* that Tarquinia Smith won't have me." Society would thus be put thoroughly at its ease, and entirely reconstituted. The only fear would be, that the people refused, who are now so anxious to conceal their discomfiture, would then be too prone to indulge in what, after all, would be only another form of the self-same egotism that now prompts such jealous concealment, would lug-in their refusal at every gap in the conversation, and would insist upon our talking of nothing else; which, it must be confessed, would be rather a nuisance, not to say a bore.

Few, we presume, will dispute that the amount of domestic intelligence announced, under the well-

known heads of Births, Marriages, and Deaths, is insufficient. It neither meets the demands of an ever-growing public curiosity concerning private affairs, nor is it worthy of our rapidly-improving civilisation. Mr. Tennyson writes, that "the many-headed beast"—by which ill-chosen phrase, we are sorry to say, he intends to designate those whom more polite and obsequious authors call "the gentle public"—"must know." Of course it must. It has a right to be kept thoroughly well informed of what is going on in the most secluded circles, the lowest no less than the highest. It is obvious that a list of births, deaths, and marriages, by no means exhausts the subjects on which it may exercise a most legitimate curiosity. We would suggest that the "Agony Column" should be the third, instead of the second, in the first page of the *Times* advertisement-sheet, and that the second should be devoted to "Proposals, Engagements, and Refusals." Their place would naturally be side by side with Births, Marriages, and Deaths, and would supplement the gap left by those inadequate items of domestic intelligence. The same sort of formula would of course be preserved; these new announcements beginning, like the old ones with which we are so familiar, "On the 1st inst., at So-and-so," &c.; and varied, as these last every now and then are, with comments of a joyful or plaintive turn, according to the necessities and incidents of each particular

case. Some of the long-established comments, with but slight variation, would serve the new purpose. "Deeply regretted by her family," in the case of certain refusals; or, "Assisted by the mother of the young lady," in the case of certain proposals, would be near enough to the forms of language with which we are already familiar, not to shock us with a sense of horrible novelty

It may be objected that the scheme, if carried out in all its grand proportions, would act injuriously upon Proposals, and therefore upon Marriage. Were the objection sound, it would of course be fatal. But not only is it based on a complete delusion; it manifests shocking inattention to what has already been said. Refusals, by virtue of those occult powers of Publicity to which we have alluded, and on which people are never tired of enlarging, would no longer be the terrible thing they now are. By the exact reverse of that principle which is expressed in the dictum, "*Omne ignotum pro mirifico est*," Refusals, when known to the whole world, would be of scarcely any importance to the very people whom they now so injuriously affect. A man would proceed from the young lady who had just rejected him to Printing-house-square, draw up a formal announcement of the fact, which would appear in the next day's impression, and then there would be an end of the matter.

If, by the objection which we have been answering, it is meant to be asserted that a young lady who was so extensively known to have refused her lover would scare away all other intending suitors, or that the rejected swain would have a bad chance of getting any second damsel to accept him, we unhesitatingly reply that never was an objection made so flatly in the teeth of experience, or the confessed tendencies of human nature. A young lady whom somebody wants, and cannot get, acquires additional social importance and prestige. The fundamental principles of Political Economy, and the simplest maxims of market-overt, are enough to establish the fact. Why, even if she had no other admirers previously, the very announcement of her having had one, and having rejected him, would of itself create a host of others. Like the stone flung behind her by Pyrrha, the poor castaway would at once beget for her a whole family of suppliants. Neither has the difficulty raised respecting the rejected lover any more substantial existence. Far from the knowledge of his having been refused, barring the way to his being accepted elsewhere, it would positively open the path for a happier issue. Men who have just been refused are proverbially sensitive to fresh charms, and notoriously ready to accept consolation. It can scarcely be doubted that there are always mothers, at least, ready to offer it; and the promptness of

their pity is usually in proportion to the number of their unmarried daughters. Instead of having to go home and die of shame, the stricken deer would be asked out to a succession of parties. Behold, once more, the benefits of Publicity! The female heart is full of sweet pîty, and a week would probably not elapse before the self-same man who so lately visited Printing-house-square to insert the announcement of his having been refused, would be off there again to have his name inserted this time in the list of the Accepted. The young lady who had recently refused him, spurred by the noblest and purest spirit of emulation, would, on seeing this announcement, speedily accept one of the several offers which the publication of her rejection of him had brought her; and thus, instead of one refusal, there would be two marriages. Perhaps the fact that the scheme would save a number of estimable people pain would not be thought to afford sufficient grounds for the adoption of a slight novelty. But the consideration that it would largely promote matrimonial engagements will commend it at once to the generous feelings and practical sense of the community, and should, we think, insure its early adoption.





WHY MEN ARE REFUSED.

WE have already laid before our readers an elaborate plan for the mitigation of the sufferings of a very large portion of mankind. Our concern was for those male members of the community whose misfortune, and, as we shall shortly show, whose fault, it usually is to be refused. But, as prevention is proverbially better than cure, we feel it our duty to propound certain rules for the instruction and guidance of those bachelors who do not as yet

“bear a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving towards the stillness of their rest,”

by adhering to which they will save themselves considerable mortification. We have no desire to abrogate the law under which man proposes and woman refuses. Still, if we can suggest certain precautions whereby it can be made to act with less frequent severity than at present, we think we shall have deserved almost as well of one sex as of the other.

Not a few of the shrewdest and most acute stu-

dents of human nature have been of opinion, that when a man receives a rebuff from a woman to whom he proposes marriage, there is a strong presumption that defective strategy has been employed by the assailant rather than that excessive obduracy has been displayed by the assailed. Woman is neither naturally nor artificially adapted to hold out against a bold assault or a properly-conducted siege. Her defences are somewhat of the Chinese order, and consist rather of war-paint than of genuine masonry. She is just strong enough in appearance to provoke a chivalrous onset, but not sufficiently so, in reality, to withstand one. But it is the greatest mistake in the world to suppose that because she has no means, and perhaps no intention, of making a serious defence, she can be induced to surrender by anything short of a serious attack. Her paraphernalia of resistance may be frivolous, and even an utter sham; but by no frivolous or counterfeit preparations will she be betrayed into accepting a parley. The Earl of Peterborough captured a town in Spain during the War of Succession by a movement of light horse; and some adventurous modern cavaliers imagine that a lady's heart may be entered by similarly trivial manœuvres. They will probably find, as the result of their effrontery, that all castles in Spain are not equally pregnable. Sir Charles Napier entered Acre in triumph on a donkey. In the particular kind of

sieges with which we are at present concerned, such a feat is, perhaps, not unfrequently repeated. But, in this case, a sort of stolid and fatalistic confidence atones for the absence of more pretentious methods of approach. Anything is better, ordinarily speaking, than ostentatiously dispensing with the recognised rules of warfare. A woman who has already almost got her heart's keys in her hand and made up her mind to hand them over, will put them back in her pocket, if the assailant dismisses all his staff and keeps the bulk of his effective force in the background. To slide from metaphor, the man who woos a woman in such a way as to create in her mind the suspicion that he is sure he can win her without the employment of quite all the means at his disposal, is pretty sure to be refused by her, and certainly deserves to be. This is as much as to say that, in order to avoid being refused, a man must not only be desperately in love, but must likewise show that he is so.

By perhaps a rather roundabout way, we have arrived at the conclusion, that men are constantly refused because they are not sufficiently in love. A really good woman—as older writers would have said, a *very* woman—will pardon a suitor almost all shortcomings, save that of sufficiency and genuineness of devotion. Her parents may reject him for his want of means, and even she herself may hesitate

to link her lot with one whose heart and lute are all his store. But she will not be untouched by his passion, nor will she deny him the consolation of knowing that she is so. He must, however, look for no such mitigation of his rebuff if he has been wanting in thoroughness of purpose. Now, it is a commoner thing than is generally supposed for men to offer to women with whom they are not, strictly speaking, in love at all. They have arrived at a certain age, are beginning to lose their zest for the ordinary delights of bachelorhood, and are receiving certain unmistakable intimations, both from the prying loquacity of their hairdresser, and from the increasing recurrence of that depressing malady, popularly known as "the next morning," that it is not always May. They have reached that stage when appearances are rapidly losing their once supreme importance, and when a pair of well-disguised slippers affords greater satisfaction to the inner consciousness than a pair of the very neatest and most fashionable tight boots. Obviously, it is time for such men to be married. Lookers-on have probably made the observation for some time past, and they themselves at length begin to see their own condition as others see it. Such a frame of mind, however, is the worst that can well be conceived for falling in love. It is often remarked—and Shakespeare has illustrated the truth for us with his usual felicity

—that a man is never in greater danger of falling in love than when he is swaggering of his invulnerableness to all female weapons. Conversely, a man is never so little likely to fall prostrate before woman's charms, as when he is positively longing to be overthrown by them. In other words, it is never so difficult for him to fall in love as when he really wants to get married. He goes to market, as it were, hoping to find there what he wants, and quite ready to pay the price—his valuable self—if he can but find what he is in search of. Unfortunately, however, he goes, so to speak, with his market-eye open, and the consequence is, that he cannot help seeing a great many things which, without being cynical, we may fairly say a gentleman who is to fall violently in love had much better not see. The proverb warns people against buying a pig in a poke, but everybody who tumbles over head and ears in love is a party—and usually, we believe, a fortunate and winning party—to a transaction very much of that complexion. But the marrying man with his market-eye open cannot, even if he would, rush into so wise a bargain. He sees only too clearly merits and defects, strong points and weak points; and his unhappy and bewildering acuteness condemns him to suspense. At length he makes up his mind—note well, his mind, not his heart—and this, his mind, is compounded of a mere preponderance of inclination, when a balance of reasons

for and against has been duly struck. His market-eye finally fixes on some particular object only to find that it has just been bought in. He is not really in love, and he cannot for his life look as if he were. He is refused, and feels very deeply humiliated. But he cannot possibly fall in love, it will be urged, to the extent which is demanded of him; if our view of the case be correct, it is too late. Was it always too late? Could he never have fallen in love? Had he always that market-eye? If he wants to avoid being refused he must pluck it out. Better, however, never to let it arrive at maturity.

There is another frequent cause of men being refused, which, though totally different, as far as they are concerned, from the one we have just been considering, acts with precisely the same effect upon women, and therefore naturally produces the same piteous result. A man may possibly be genuinely in love, and yet, from excessive fear of letting his heart go all lengths, of risking his dignity, and what Thackeray called his "twopenny-halfpenny personality,"—from being a prig, in fact,—may not show himself to be so thoroughly enamoured as he really is. To such a one women ought not to show any quarter, and we must do them the justice to say that they very rarely do. These skirmishers in the field of love have a preference for mere amorous brushes and preliminary encounters, for exploring the ground

and eschewing a fair stand-up fight. It is gratifying to know that they not unfrequently experience a crushing defeat.

Again, in love, as in other enterprises, failure—*i.e.* a refusal—is often due to want of perseverance. Mr. Spectator lays it down that no virtuous woman accepts a man's first offer. She must, he says, be as conventionally hypocritical as a dean when he is asked to become a bishop. Women—and deans also, perhaps—are more natural than they used to be; and no man need now concern himself about the virtue of his wife, if he suddenly remembers that she did not make him repeat his offence at a certain critical period of their existence. Nevertheless, the man who is in love with a woman is an ass if he takes her first "No" as meaning anything more than an expression of hesitation. Some men think so highly of themselves that even the slightest doubt concerning their value by a woman is enough to offend their ambition. They retire, chagrined, often leaving the woman who has mortified them almost as miserable as themselves. The woman we pity, but for them we have not a spark of compassion. In love, as in war, poor Mr. Lincoln's plan of "pegging away" is the surest road to victory.

There, should, however, simply be manliness in the perseverance, and not mawkish importunity. If a man has fully persuaded a woman that she can, if

she will, make him happy for life, the less he lets her see that she can make him miserable, even for any considerable section of it, the better. Women are not very chivalrous, and they will usually take advantage of any accidental power they may possess. They should be followed up, but never whimpered after. It is not in their nature to like this last miserable act of homage. They love to resist, but they love better to be beaten. Destined, and most happily and properly destined, to submit to man for the greater part of their lives, do they ask too much in demanding that men should once—just once—submit to them in the most abject manner that can possibly be conceived? It is well for both—indeed, it is absolutely necessary for their complete and perfect union in married life—that the man should have undergone this perhaps scarcely agreeable operation. In some Roman Catholic churches there is a little door called the “door of humility,” at which you must bend nearly double in order to be able to enter. Once clear of it, you may stand erect before the altar. May not the analogy serve to point our foregoing remarks, and, though we might still further expand them, fitly bring them to a close?



ROMANTIC LOVERS.

WE think it will scarcely be doubted that it is the prevailing opinion that women are more romantic than men, especially in all that concerns the affairs of life; and we are quite sure the opinion is most erroneous. We by no means wish to contravene that dictum of so great an authority on all that regards human nature as the author of *Don Juan*, which lays it down that "Love is from man's life a thing apart—'tis woman's whole existence;" and we have certainly no interest in doing so, since it materially helps to prove our case. A romantic mood is necessarily an exceptional and a transitory, even though a recurring, mood; whereas the mood that is invariable and ever-present must equally inevitably be more or less practical and subdued in its character. Man flies from himself and his habitual occupations to the romantic and the ideal. Women have no need to take any such aerial flight. They already live in the air, though rather in the fashion of swallows, never poisoning themselves

too far from the ground, and almost touching it sometimes, particularly when the upper strata of the atmosphere become too rarified. It is then, of all times, that men, like eagles, are most anxious to soar, and are irritated to find that, if they do so, they must soar alone. The sensible swallows refuse to accompany them.

A little attention to the details of every-day life will fully account for these phenomena. Women expect to be married just as men expect to make or have made for them a career in life. In the one case, being called to the Bar, getting a picture into the Royal Academy, preaching the first sermon, being admitted as partner in a flourishing concern, or finding the particular borough or county that will provide admittance into Parliament, are the definite objects on which a young man's thoughts are and ought to be fixed. In the other, having the offer of a home, of an establishment to manage, of a household to control,—perhaps of a family to supervise,—this is the one event which a girl, after arriving at years of discretion, has to contemplate. It is far too serious a matter for her, unless she is an absolute goose, to think about romantically; and she no more does so than men think romantically about the investment of their money, the mixing of their colours, their approaching legal examination, or the chances of coming in at the head of the poll. When the

latter have settled these matters to their satisfaction, or otherwise, the law of reaction urges them to considerations of a totally different character. They want to fall in love and to marry. If they are men at all,—men who rely upon their wit, their energy, and their opportunities, to provide them with a competence equal to all emergencies,—they have no need to introduce business calculations into their designs of love and marriage. They can afford to let the design be exclusively a romantic one; and though we are perfectly aware that there are some gross and some grotesque exceptions to this rule, the person who doubts that most men marry for love can have had but little close experience of the male sex—in this country, at least. The man falls in love, then, and is prepared for a romance,—a something very different from his briefs, his electioneering, his painting, his leading articles, or his double entry. Nine times out of ten, we will undertake to say, he is disappointed to find that the young lady of his choice, even if she favours his suit from the very outset, is far from being as romantic as himself. In the first place, he knows his own mind, and she does not. Did he quite know his own mind, we should like to hear, when he first betook himself to a serious examination of his future prospects in life? Had he no doubts as to what line of business he should go into, what firm he should seek to join with his

capital; whether he should choose animal or landscape painting for his speciality, whether he should practise at the Common Law or at the Chancery Bar, whether he should throw in his lot with the Conservatives or with the Whigs? He must have had a decided liking for the particular course which he eventually adopted; but was it so overpowering as to prevent him from considering an alternative one? The fascinating young person, whom he is now endeavouring to entice into a very decided course indeed, and who is not altogether disinclined to take it, may she not legitimately entertain similar hesitation? He is asking her to choose her irrevocable career in life, and she naturally manifests a little caution and vacillation. Did not he himself do precisely the same only a short time ago? But her doubts and scruples vex and irritate him. They detract from the perfect romance for which he was prepared, the unalloyed enjoyment of which he had previously pictured to himself. Instead of this, he finds himself entangled in a transaction fully as uncertain and wavering as the patronage of attorneys, the decision of the Hanging Committee, the judgment of editors, or the rate of exchange. He is dying for a row on the river with the object of his affections, as the sunset faints into twilight, or for a solitary stroll with her in moonlit avenues of beech and chestnut; whilst she is hesitating whether she

ought to do anything of the kind, and reflecting that if she does, she will probably be compelled to come to a decision on a question of life or living death before the close of the tender adventure. Moreover, other people—her own sex, more especially; and think of the horror of that!—are watching to see whether she will take to the water or the wood, and what comes of her daring. Her lover, on the contrary, has nothing to lose, and everything to win; and he is in far too ecstatic a condition to be alive to the looks or attitude of anybody save those of the object of his passion. All he wants is his chance. He could well afford to face the vigilance and comments of the crowd, if she would. Only she is not romantic enough to do so. She spoils his anticipated delights by being so abominably practical.

Supposing, however, that, governed by practical considerations—among which, be it thoroughly understood, are included a decided personal preference, and a sanguine belief that the man will make her happy—she accepts the ardent swain, the period of courtship has come to a close without affording him all the satisfaction which he had dreamily yet fondly imagined it would be sure to bring him. In other words, his courtship has not been so romantic as he expected it would be. It has not consisted altogether of stars, flowers, sweet unbroken intercourse, in which two souls were drawn nearer and nearer, and

a glorious climax of uttered worship, responded to by a glowing silence more eloquent than all words. Its chief features, now that he recalls them, were disappointments, delays, *contretemps*, *tête-à-tête* interviews, broken in upon almost as soon as begun, the stare of vulgar eyes, opportunities sought and provokingly prevented—now by chance, now it seemed by malice—and at last a few hurried words spoken in desperation at a most inopportune and unromantic moment, but which, nevertheless, appeared to have clenched the matter, though the young lady slipped, or was carried away from him, almost as soon as she had given him to understand, in a confused sort of way, that—well, yes, she would marry him. Courtship, accordingly, is over, and engagement now begins. Now surely he will be allowed to taste plentifully of the romantic sweets of which he feels he has, so far, been defrauded. Again he is destined to be disillusioned. A girl never belongs so little to herself, and therefore so little to her lover, as during the period that she is engaged to him. It seems to him as though she is always either writing letters or seeing the dressmaker. On the very smallest provocation from the latter, she starts away from him. Besides, there are scores of other people who have claims upon her. He must not be so selfish, they tell him. He will soon have her all to himself, and he ought to have some consideration for the feelings

of those from whom he is about to tear her for ever. Then her domestic circle, and indeed her social one, have claims upon him, as well as upon her. He really must not expect to spend all his spare time with her. He has the acquaintance of all her relations, and all her principal friends, to make. This is certainly not a romantic operation ; but it has to be gone through, and it provokes him into observing that his betrothed thinks it quite as indispensable as they do, and enters into it with just the same zest. Whereupon he is, perhaps, disposed to conclude this amuses her far more than being alone with him. If he be a wise man, he will refrain from arriving at any conclusions just at present ; and, indeed, he is kept in a too well-sustained state of turmoil for him to do so. Then, too, she has to make the acquaintance of his relations and his friends ; until he scarcely knows whether he hates her people or his own most. All this, which to him is dreadful, seems to be to her the most entertaining part of the business. As time goes on, and the engagement period draws to a close, he sees less of her than ever. Creatures called bridesmaids appear to have shot up into sudden importance, and to have superseded him as a subject of interest. Nobody in particular wants him just now, unless it be the family lawyer. It need scarcely be said that his interviews with this last individual are not of a romantic character. In

his despondency, he positively goes down to Doctors' Commons, where he finds some other dismal-looking specimens of his own sex, who have come on the same lugubrious errand as himself. He pays his money, gets a bit of paper, and goes away. He then waits with heroic resignation till that bit of paper becomes due. Perhaps he ventures on a farewell supper to his bachelor friends; or perhaps they give him one. When it is over, he probably makes the reflection that it has been the most romantic incident of the nondescript period which now, happily, is over.

But if he has chosen wisely, and he be a really good fellow—a man entitled to have care of a woman—his reward is at hand. He will find the woman far more romantic than the girl, the wife more romantic than the maiden. Now she does really belong to him, and she is willing to show that she does. Just as, having settled upon and commenced his career, he lightly turned to thoughts of love, so, the business arrangements of her life having been concluded for her, she is ready for its more romantic side. She expected to find it after marriage, not before it; a shame on—if not woe to—the man who disappoints her! She will take any amount of moonlight strolls with him now, if he only shows that he still cares for them. If he does not, he is either an ass or a brute. The time has come when

she prefers his society to that of all the world, provided he be of the same mind himself as he was before marriage. She cares for him infinitely more than she did before she married him. Of course, if his love for her is not as strong as it was, he will miss his romance now by his own fault, just as he previously missed it by the artificial nature of things from which, in civilised communities, it is not easy to escape. Some few men, happily, do escape it. But even if they do not, it is open to them to find in the tender experiences of married life more than compensation for their disappointment.





THE TIME FOR MARRYING.

IF there be a time for all things, there surely must be a time for the most universal and important thing in life. Certain feminine enthusiasts might, perhaps, be disposed to urge that the particular thing in question is in itself so desirable that no time can be the wrong time; but it is doubtful if so absolute an opinion would recommend itself to the more moderate portion of the community. Cynical members of the other sex might, on the contrary, be tempted to remark that no time could possibly be appropriate for committing so preposterous a blunder, whilst the more sardonic of them might append the observation, that as, nevertheless, no amount of sagacity or manly resolution can protect most people from perpetrating it sooner or later, perhaps, after all, the sooner it is perpetrated the better. None of these views, however, can be regarded as serious; and, having laid it down as a sound and sure proposition that there is a tide in the affairs of men which, if taken at the

turn, leads on to at least a satisfactory connubial state, we have only to consider at what period of life, and under what circumstances, it presents itself. The investigation is obviously one of the extremest gravity.

About the earliest independent act of nearly every male person who has reached or is approaching man's estate is, to fall in love. It is agreeable for us to be able to think so, for the spontaneous step argues great ingenuousness of soul. It is consoling, if not equally agreeable, to know that it does not often lead to marriage. The excellent young man is ardently anxious that it should, such is the generous probity of his nature; and in all probability he chafes at the kind circumstance which baffles his desires. Doubtless he will live to judge the hated obstacles more leniently; but, in the mean time, he regards himself as the most cruelly treated of youths. Should the obstructions be sufficiently enduring, he will end by accepting his defeat, if not with cheerfulness, at least with resignation, since it is of this period of life that Scott's dictum may be particularly predicated:

"Love flows like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide."

Occasionally, however, it will occur that this "calf-love"—for such, we believe, is the irreverent name commonly applied to it—is gratified with fruition;

and it is only when this is the case that we are enabled distinctly to point the moral that very early manhood is *not* the time for marrying. The unsatisfactory sequel, then, does so for us with unhappy emphasis. "No youth can be a master," says Goethe; and, though he is speaking of art and philosophy, the remark is equally true of domestic life. Youth is all astray, and most of all in the government of itself, and it is obvious that its government of others is an impossibility. Phaeton did not fail more hopelessly in the attempt to discharge the functions of Apollo, than Apollo would if seeking to perform the offices of Jupiter. The *imperium Jovis* befalls a man, if ever, in a more advanced stage of life than the early twenties. Capacity for rule—for quiet, unostentatious rule, of course—is, with all deference to Mr. Mill, the one indispensable divinity of the hearth; it is, indeed, the household god, without whose invisible presence all heavenly protection seems to be withdrawn from home. Moreover, the imagination of youth, though a glorious companion in the realms of space and the incontrovertible fictions of the air, is a sadly misleading mentor in terrestrial travels. It is not only that it befools the juvenile lover into investing the creature of his winged fancy with qualifications such as neither she nor any woman that ever lived can by any possibility possess, but it still more ludicrously deludes him into

crediting himself with virtues which he would be more than human if he really had; and with crowning deception it leads him to ignore every one of those mundane conditions which, could the angels themselves descend from heaven, would soon transmute them into mortals. Such, too, is the infirmity of our natures, that, though we must needs be held responsible for our own illusions, we usually vent all our annoyance on those who destroy them for us. In the case we are considering, it is the young wife who is the disenchantress. The fault is in no sense hers, but the penalty partly is, and the rest of it is her husband's. Had he only been ten years older, they might have been as happy a couple as is consistent with sublunary circumstances. To what extent they may be unhappy, and to what extremity of ill their unhappiness may by ill chance conduct them, we have not the heart to inquire.

But we will suppose—and luckily the supposition is not a hazardous one, but perfectly conformable to general experience—that first love is by no means last love, but actually comes to be regarded, by a retrospective vision that perhaps is not wholly disinterested in the view it takes, as scarcely love at all. In other words, let us suppose that a man has reached that particular period of life, essentially a transitional one, at which, unless he is a true philosopher—and he never is just at that time, though he

invariably regards himself as such—the independent male is rather ashamed of ever having been in love, and utterly refuses to be subject to women. He is above that sort of thing now. He does not want to marry; indeed, he would not marry for worlds. He has no objection to the fair sex. On the contrary, he is extremely and conspicuously partial to them, but it is in a deliberately desultory way. We have an invincible objection to saying anything that may sound offensive to women; but we are speaking historically, and are describing the masculine attitude towards them under certain ephemeral circumstances, without in any degree commending it. Therefore is it that we state that the average man, during what may be called the period of suspended animation in his existence, regards women rather as the *jucunda* than the *idonea vitæ*, and more in the light of dolls than of the deities they once appeared to him, or than in that of indispensable companions as he will eventually come to consider them. He finds them—nearly all of them—both pretty and agreeable; and when he has got nothing else to do, he instinctively flies to their fascinating but by no means perilous society. He brightens his wit upon them, with them regales his elegant indolence, and occasionally gratifies his vanity. On the whole, he is grateful to them, and he would indeed be a monster were he otherwise, for they make life intensely

though quietly pleasant to him. He always speaks well of them—better indeed than they speak of him; but—perhaps we ought to say, *for*—he never proposes to marry any of them. Imagination has long ceased to be his guide, and he has not yet fallen into the hands of any other and less flighty familiar. He is just now his own philosopher and friend, and he picks his way through life, encumbered though it be with infinite snares, with almost supernatural security. Clearly it is superfluous to inquire if this be the period at which a man should marry, since he is so averse as positively to be unable to take the steps which lead to his doing so. He will not fall in love. More than that; he cannot. And we would never recommend so serious a consequence unless preceded by its legitimate cause.

Happily, however, fickleness is not the exclusive characteristic of extreme youth, nor is love the only pursuit in which mankind display their insatiable mania for change. They grow tired of not loving almost as soon as of its opposite, and continued liberty is as irksome to them as continued thralldom. Woman in general, that was to our typical human specimen so charming a toy, ere long becomes to him an intolerable bore, and the society that recently filled the vacuum of existence now does but increase it. He has said all his good things; his wit is exhausted; his vanity is satiated; his very indolence is oppressed

with fruitless frivolity; his digestion has shown signs of its existence; he would not swear that he has not felt a twinge of gout, and he *would* swear that his attention has been called to two or three hairs of inharmonious gray; and, following in the wake of innumerable ancestors, his now really manly bosom yearns for the *domus et placens uxor*—to be a householder and a husband. He has evaded the rates and taxes of life quite long enough, and it is time that he should be put on the matrimonial register. Now is his time; now the turn of the tide of which we spoke. Woe to him if he allows it to pass! The very minutes are precious. Once more, just as in youth, he actually wishes to be married, and the wish throws him into a condition for being once more deluded. But his rejuvenescence is only partial; and accordingly, most luckily for him, and for everybody concerned, his delusion will be limited. It will be just enough to permit of his fancying somebody or other rather divine, tempered by the half-suppressed suspicion that she will turn out, after all, to be tolerably human. In such a mixed mood, he is most likely to choose both wisely and well. But let him choose quickly; for his rejuvenescence, besides being partial, is likewise very transitory; and should he wait till the recovered wish to marry deepens into a desperate sort of feeling that he fears he never will, and that he does not know whom on earth to select, he will

find that his heart has for ever fallen into the sere and yellow leaf, and that marriage, if he ever accomplishes it, will at best be a makeshift. This, then, is the time for marrying, when the curfew-bell is tolling and announcing that the fires of youth must be extinguished. The passionate flame of early manhood burns too fitfully and fiercely for the domestic hearth; it troubles more than it warms. But it is just as it is expiring, in obedience to a sovereign law, and whilst yet it yields sufficient light for a discriminating choice, that selection should be made of a companion for the curtained evening of life. Waiting till it is completely out, a man will have to choose in the dark. Thus, even satiety is the wise man's friend; and in nothing does it show its friendliness more than in this—that it quits him the moment it has performed its celestial mission and linked him to a wife.





THE TIME FOR BEING MARRIED.

IN the paper entitled "The Time for Marrying," we by no means have exhausted, or even approached, the subject contemplated by this one. Men marry. Women are married. The distinction is fundamental and enormous. We are perfectly aware that there is a class of human beings who propose to abolish the distinction; but, as the prospect of their theory being carried into practical effect is infinitely distant, no justification is required for our disregarding it.

But just, as we hold, in common with the sane portion of humanity, that it is a woman's instinct and duty to "wait till she is asked," so also, in common with that sane section, do we believe that it is her instinct and mission to be asked. Silly philosophers and peripatetic emancipators notwithstanding, the main business of a girl's life is to have a husband. She may properly say with the poet, though of course with an altered application of the words :

"This is my task, this was I sent to do,"

If she does not succeed in this, her life is a comparative failure. No amount of hypocrisy on the one side, or of delicate affection on the other, can avail to obscure the clear certainty in the mind of anybody who knows human nature, that every woman commences life with the sure hope of being loved by some man or other, and quits it, if the hope be not realised, with a feeling of disappointment. Should anyone think this derogatory to the female sex, he must have a strange notion of dignity. For our part, we do not think that dignity consists in obstinate outrages upon nature. A certain number of women do not get married, and we have no wish to apportion the blame of such a misfortune among men, women, and society. It is enough for us to note the fact and deplore it, and, as far as we can, to diminish its recurrence. With that object in view, it is obviously no superfluous task to inquire what is the best time for girls to be married. *Nullum tempus occurrit Ecclesiæ*: no doubt, practically, it is never too late to approach the hymeneal altar; but it may be questioned if, in many instances at least, better never than late would not be a safer motto. Better late, however, than too soon; for, to put it on no other ground, the results of the mistake have to be borne for a much shorter period in the former event than in the latter. To close life with a blunder that is irremediable is bad

enough, but to commence it with such a one is too terrible to think of. Yet it is not unoften committed; for early marriages still have their advocates, though the arguments, when stripped bare, are somewhat cynical. Women who are in favour of them, regard marriage as an inevitable leap in the dark, and so arrive at the conclusion that it might just as well be taken with eyes shut as with eyes open. Moreover, they consider that though matrimony is a matter of course, it is, for the wife at least, an arduous lot, and therefore that the sooner the back is broken to the burden the easier will the latter be to bear. To such a view our only remark must be, that Calvinistic temperaments illustrate, if they do not prove, the doctrine of predestination, and that nothing in the world is so easily attainable as self-inflicted martyrdom. Of course, if life is nothing but a valley of tears, which must be gone through, there is an end of the matter; but as there are some other people, who fancy they have observed that the paths through life are many and various, we had perhaps better restrict ourselves to addressing those whose premises agree with our own. But before doing so we have likewise to notice the assumption made by the male advocates of very early marriages for girls. It is equally cynical with the other, and about equally true. It is, that a girl ought to be united to a husband—for his sake, chiefly,

mind—before all the freshness of life and the innocence of her nature have been worn down by experience. We would assure these gentlemen that the freshness of a really fresh disposition is not so easily exhausted, and that they make a profound mistake in confounding two very different things—innocence and ignorance. A girl of three-and-twenty cannot well be as ignorant as one of seventeen; but we are pleased to think that she can be quite as innocent, and sometimes—paradoxical as it may sound—considerably more so. A very little reflection, joined to the most trivial psychological information, will show how this may easily be the case. In men, a somewhat analogous phenomenon is commonly recognised; it being an ordinary but a perfectly true remark, that they are often much younger at forty than at twenty-seven. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing, and a little experience is even more so. The ebullitions of female curiosity and restlessness are familiar to every serious student of human nature, who also knows that by two or three-and-twenty they have usually subsided. Moreover, the moral sense, unlike the intellectual, is by no means precocious in the feminine character, and is of still later development than is generally supposed. Of course if a man wants to marry a blossom, he may do so: but most cautious people would prefer to wait till the fruit was at least formed. And as we have seen, it

is only those who think it is worth nothing when it has reached that stage who would hesitate to do so.

To bid farewell, however, to cynics, both female and male, and to confer with those who believe that life may be made tolerably happy and agreeable by the exercise of a little sagacity, we will approach the positive side of the question, and assume that there is a time at or about which it is best, if possible, for a girl to be married. When is it? Is it not at that period when she is most likely to have the greatest number of serious admirers, and when, at the same time, she is in the best position to make a deliberate choice? A person who would deny this would deny the first postulate in Euclid. Now, when does this period occur? Is it during a girl's teens? It can be demonstrated that it is not. During that attractive but doubtful season she will not fail to have abundance of flattering friends, for, if she is not triumphantly winsome just about that time, when will she be? But it will generally be found that her admirers are more numerous than staunch. In fact, every fresh comer admires her, but only the inexperienced or the jaded admire her long. She pleases the boys, and is disagreeably declaimed about by men of advanced years. Those are most enthusiastic about her who have the least to offer her. She gratifies the eye, but fails to satisfy either the reason

or the heart, of the manly observer. He has nothing to say against her; indeed, he finds her as beautiful as the sunshine. He remembers, however, that she is just as fitful. On her side, she is about as capable of deliberate choice as of deliberate self-destruction. Thackeray, in one of his most charming poems of society, tells a man to wait till he is forty, for that "then he knows the worth of a lass;" and certainly the worth of a man, on the other hand, even did such present himself for measurement, is not to be estimated by a girl of eighteen. But, as we have seen, it is not often that her serious favour is solicited by a real man. The latter is not likely to be enamoured by the heroine of a shadow-dance. Let her "bide her time;" and, without having in the smallest degree lost her large love of existence, her faith in the goodness of things, and her hope in the brightness of her own destiny, she will arrive at a stature by help of which she will see neither under life nor over it, but will find herself confronted by her equals, to one of whom she will concede the privilege of being, for practical purposes, her superior. It is not necessary to shrink from the word, or the meaning of it. As long as a girl cannot feel that she could yield, if need were, to the man who asks her to marry him, she may depend upon it that her allotted lord has not yet arrived. Should she, however, wilfully nurse the idea that she never could submit to any man, be

his merits in her eyes what they may, she will live either to obey somebody, obedience to whom is an outrage upon life and liberty, or to please herself, and herself only, to the end of the chapter. And to please herself only being no woman's mission, the amount of happiness she will extract from the solitary process may easily be surmised. Like everybody else, she must take life on the bound, if she means to make the most of it. It is on the bound when the admiration of admired men comes thick and fast; but, at that momentous time, let her be more keenly alive to their merits than to her own. It is a fair but essentially fugitive time; and the love she really thinks it desirable to keep she must attach now. There is always a temptation to be wasteful amidst plenty; but long fast is the sequel to all such confident prodigality. Painful anxiety succeeds to joyous thoughtlessness, and anxiety is not favourable to deliberate choice. A sensible man will ask a woman to relinquish her independence at the very moment when independence seems most bewitching and remunerative; and a sensible girl, to say nothing of a loving one, will close with his request for that very reason of all others. Nobody knowingly asks for dregs, and nobody can honestly bestow them, making-believe that the cup is still full to the brim. It is at the very summit of girlish ambition that the guiding hand should be clasped which is to lead her

into the secluded but happy valley of domestic life. She must be peculiarly unfortunate if it is not offered; but she is worse than a fool if she does not then encourage and accept it.





LONG ENGAGEMENTS.

THE practical spirit of the age has disposed people to look with marked disfavour upon long engagements, and for once the spirit of the age has invaded the domain of domestic ethics without doing them any hurt. Nearly everybody now approves of matrimonial engagements being, like others of not quite so bloodless a character, short, sharp, and decisive. Marriage is one of those desperate experiments to which Macbeth's famous words, used in the half-sense in which alone they seem ever to be employed, are peculiarly applicable: if the thing is to be done at all, "then 'twere well it were done quickly." The old saw about marrying in haste and repenting at leisure can scarcely be construed as referring to betrothals, since even the law on the subject, which is by no means new, does not contemplate such a process as repentance, and attaches a heavy penalty to indulgence in it. Formerly, people who were engaged were considered to be as good as married; and the canon-law

as understood at Rome, we believe, requires a formal dispensation from such a pledge before any other union is permissible. It must therefore have been rather to entering into engagements than to their natural and final result, that the familiar warning referred; and to that extent it was, perhaps, a sound one. Modern practice, however, for the most part, does not pay much heed to it, even when taken in this sense; the fact being that there is often quite as much haste in getting two young persons engaged as in getting them married. A cynical writer has remarked that a man cannot know too much about his wife before marriage, or too little after it. Without accepting the second disagreeable observation, we may still allow that there is a certain amount of perfectly inoffensive wisdom in the first. But it tells against hasty engagements rather than in favour of long ones; and were the former instead of the latter our present inquiry, we think we could show grave cause against a habit which is becoming exceedingly common. But it is not; and we have alluded to it only because we are inclined to think that a brief engagement finds its full justification only when it has not been a rash one.

But whether rash or the result of due reflection, when once entered upon, the sooner it is closed the better. When so very fine a boundary separates an ardent couple from their mutually-desired destiny,

they might as well "jump the life to come," as Macbeth again has it, with happy despatch; and, where matters are arranged with sagacity, any delay that may take place is commonly due to artificial rather than to natural obstructions. Some such trivial postponement is, of course, inevitable, and is always accepted with a good grace. In the first place, as everybody knows, a marriage is not a marriage, or, at any rate, it is not a wedding, unless the whole world is there to see it; and how can the whole world be there unless it is properly apprised of the intended ceremonial? It thus becomes obvious that consideration must be paid to the convenience of the spectators as well as to the feelings of the principal actors, and a severe penalty may be incurred by neglecting this important point. It is true that the audience does not pay at the door of the building in which the spectacle is to be witnessed, but the specially-invited portion of it is usually expected to give a gratuity—and no slight one—for the benefit of the two chief performers. For it must furthermore be remembered that the bride and bridegroom, though the chief, are not the only performers, and the convenience of those who play secondary, but, nevertheless, indispensable parts, and even that of the supernumeraries, must likewise be consulted. Next to the two protagonists, the bride and her walking gentleman, come those inferior but deserving

characters, the bridesmaids and the best man. The engagements of the latter are not usually of so pressing a character as to make him stand in the way of an early arrangement. His *rôle* requires very little conning, and his wardrobe is always more or less ready. Moreover, he can always answer for himself, his movements not being dependent upon those of other people. But with the bridesmaids it is different. Their time is not altogether their own; and the date, which may be perfectly agreeable to one of them, or to the maternal regulator of the movements of one of them, may completely clash with the arrangements of the maternal regulator of the movements of another of them. Of course, the more numerous the bridesmaids the more complex the difficulties of this description. Supposing these little preliminaries to be got over smoothly, there is still the grave question of costume to be considered. Here, however, it is the wardrobe of the *prima donna*, and not of the subsidiary *artistes*, which governs the interval between engagement and union. The time that is long enough for her is more than long enough for them. We are assured that six weeks is a short allowance for the preparation of a *trousseau*—that is, be it understood, when it is once, as the feminine phrase is, put in hand. Taking all these various matters into consideration, we shall arrive at the conclusion that the period of engagement cannot well

be less than three months, and that even this brief interval must be regarded as inserted rather from necessity than deliberate choice.

Whenever an engagement is protracted much beyond this limit, it is seldom the fault of feminine obstruction. It is not women who are responsible for long engagements and their accompanying evils. One would have thought, indeed, that neither would men do anything to lengthen so trying an ordeal; and no doubt they never do when they can help themselves. But the proverb *femme le veut, Dieu le veut*, cannot be modified in favour of the sex that has less influence with the higher powers. A man may desire a thing very ardently, and yet the gods remain cruelly inexorable. He is fettered by circumstances much more than the object of his affections. His love at least is very rarely "free as air." We may say that it never is, unless he be either very rich or entirely without occupation. Even a thriving young banker or a rising barrister can get away for the indispensable honeymoon only at fixed seasons of the year; and, to take the case of the latter, should he engage himself in the spring, at the very period when we are told that a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love, how can he possibly go to the Tyrol or South Italy—in other words, how can he possibly get married—before the long vacation? A rival, or a pardonable impatience,

may have hurried him into the step; and the consequence is that the engagement must perforce be one of six months, instead of the normal three which was the result of the accurate and conscientious calculation we just now made. Even six months, however, though long no doubt to a couple of lovers solicitous to annihilate time, are in practice tolerable, and certainly need not be specially reprobated on the score of ethical expediency. But when it is a matter of twice six months, three times six months, possibly with "perhaps" at the end of them—when, in a word, the length of the engagement becomes indefinite—the sagacious moralist has a right to step in and shake his head. It is not often that he has to do so, inasmuch as he is nowadays usually anticipated by a person of at least equal sagacity, the young lady's mamma, if not by the young lady herself; a most natural proceeding, seeing that where a lover pleads for so long a delay, he does so on the preposterous plea of temporary poverty, which is of course shortly to disappear.

Sometimes, however, the plea is weakly listened to, and then we have a genuine instance of a long engagement. To the poor man himself, who has laboured so hard to obtain the concession, it cannot fail to be a serious affliction of the flesh. For he is, as it were, in the dock, and on his trial the whole time. He cannot help feeling conscious that all his

acquaintances—at least, all his female acquaintances—are perpetually on the point of saying to him, and, but for consideration for his feelings, would say to him, “When *are* you going to be in a position to marry that poor girl?” He knows that they think the best days of her life are slipping away in wearisome waiting for his pecuniary success; and at one of two states of mind he must, perforce, soon arrive. He must be made either exceedingly irritable by, or exceedingly resigned to, the situation. On the first supposition he cannot well be a very happy, nor, on the second, a very fascinating, lover. He becomes either a burden to himself or to other people; either as nervously anxious as a man who has not yet been accepted, or as offensively at home and satisfied about the matter as if he were already a husband. But it is the girl who really deserves all our commiseration. She is bound hand and foot, and tied to a man who is neither alive nor dead; neither a lover who draws her, nor a husband whom she draws. She can think of nobody and nothing else, and yet she thinks in vain. She is ruined as a daughter and a sister, and utterly spoiled as a member of general society; and yet she is not a wife, or mistress of a household. She has given up almost everything, and she gets absolutely nothing in return; nothing, at least, but rebukes from her parents for being absorbed in vacancy and neglecting her duties;

nothing but jokes from her brothers; nothing but lukewarm invitations from her old friends. At home, she feels that she is there on sufferance; and abroad, she is a superfluous nondescript. A situation that ought to be sublime, and did commence by being, at any rate, pathetic, before very long is something more than ridiculous. It is positively funny; and the sacred affections of the young become the sport of every idle wag and every merciless gossip. Even a short engagement is not the pleasantest portion of a woman's life; but a long one must be well-nigh insufferable. When married life does come—if it ever does—its more novel and delicate pleasures have been discounted, and at what a price! It seems a hard doctrine that there must be no love where there is not sufficient money; but we must take this world as we find it, and a very limited experience is enough to convince anybody that it was not made exclusively or expressly for love. Let us indulge in the pleasing hope that the next one is. And as we know, at least, that in it there is no marrying, or giving in marriage, engagements can evidently there be as long as anybody could possibly desire.



GOOD MATCHES.

MODERN fabricators of epigrams, more intent upon form than substance, and far more solicitous to say what shall seem pointed than what shall be really true, have attempted to add a corollary to Rochefoucauld's celebrated *mot* concerning the misfortunes of our friends, by remarking, that there is something in their good fortune which is not altogether agreeable to us. This superficial assertion will not bear that rigid examination which may be extended, without any detriment, to the profound one from which it is copied; and even if a persistent cynicism should maintain that there are many cases in which it holds good, there is certainly one golden exception in which it not only does not, but where the very reverse may be sweepingly predicated. The exception we refer to comprises all those instances in which the particular piece of good fortune is what is technically called an "engagement." We are aware that a certain school of saturnine humorists

question the goodness of the fortune presumed in such an occurrence, and would point to the joy displayed by people when they hear of it, as a conclusive sign of human malice, and only another demonstration of the truth of the original apothegm. Into such subtle depths of cynicism, however, we confess ourselves incapable of diving; and we must be content to remark, that the rejoicing on such occasions, besides being universal, appears to us to be unfeigned and genuine. The maxim that no news is good news, is an essentially masculine notion. To the feminine mind, any news is better than none; but the best news in the world is that which announces that some girl or other is engaged to be married. She need not even be a friend for the intelligence to produce intense exhilaration. A mere acquaintance, or even the acquaintance of an acquaintance, when associated with such an incident, becomes a joy, at least for the moment. It is no exaggeration to say that women, when first made the depositaries of such a piece of information, cannot contain themselves for delight. They must unbosom themselves of the tremendous bit of intelligence—even though it be only to those unsympathising creatures, a husband or a brother. In default of any more intelligent companion, an effort may be made during breakfast, immediately after the letter bringing the news may have arrived, to excite them

to a sense of the interest and importance of the event. But, breakfast over, some more harmonious nature must be discovered with which to share the blissful announcement. For that day, household duties will be partially in abeyance. The morning will be spent mostly in writing letters, and the afternoon will necessarily be wholly devoted to making calls. Ordinarily, women are rather punctilious on these points. They make entries, either in their diaries or in the tablets of their retentive brains, of the respective days on which they last wrote or paid a visit to their friends, and whether due rejoinder to either class of attention has since been made. "She owes me a call," and "I wrote to her last," are familiar arguments in female society, and are always held to be conclusive. But there is an occasion when this stringent rule is relaxed, indeed, entirely abrogated. If a woman has received the news of an engagement, she feels bound by a higher law even than that of "return calls," or "letter for letter," to communicate it without loss of time. Ceremony is waived, and even enemies have been known to be forgiven in such emergencies. This great touch of nature makes the alien kin again.

It is perfectly clear, therefore, that an engagement is considered a good thing in itself. Just as any news is better than no news at all, so any engagement is better than none. But there must be

degrees of excellence in both cases, and the degree of delight will be proportioned to the goodness of the intelligence communicated. Hence, when the fact of the engagement has been hurriedly blurted out, the very first question invariably asked is, "And is it a good match?" Now, to the uninitiated mind, this inquiry would not convey much meaning. The phrase is certainly not a very classical one, and does not carry its proper significance on the surface. That in itself it is not only obscure, but positively confusing, may be concluded from the fact that women use it equally when merely wanting to know if the trimming of a dress harmonises with its material, or if the shades of their worsteds have been properly selected. Left to one's own unaided judgment in the matter, one would naturally surmise, on hearing the question put concerning two people who are about to be united for life, that the interrogator desired to be informed if they were somewhat alike in the colour and temper of their minds, if they were of a comparatively equal age, if their characters had substantial resemblances with just agreeable shades of difference, and if their antecedents had sufficient in common to encourage the belief that their joint future would not be discordant. We need hardly say that, if a person were to understand the question in that sense, and were so to answer it, he would be regarded as exceedingly simple. "Is it a good

match?" means something totally different; and in the female world it is never, by any chance, misunderstood. It means, Can the man whom the young lady is about to marry give her a large slice of those things of the world which the speaker considers pre-eminently good? Can he allow her three or four hundred a-year to dress upon? (It will be seen that we are supposing a moderate case.) Can he give her a house in town and a house in the country? Can he keep her an opera-box, or, at any rate, take her or send her—for the one seems to be as good as the other—to the Opera as often as ever she would care to go? Can he provide brougham and landau, park-phaeton and saddle-horses? Will he take her into the "best" society, and follow that best society in its annual eccentric orbit round what it conceives to be the world? Briefly—has he got plenty of money; and, if he has, how much is it?

It is not surprising that the downright moral mind, when hearing a question—and a first, cardinal question—put, which is intended to sum up all the inquiries detailed above, should be up in arms against it. Stated nakedly and without periphrasis—robbed, in fact, of the euphemistic language in which it is couched—it seems a very coarse, not to say immoral, inquiry. It sounds like materialism in its grossest and most unblushing form. But the downright moral mind is not, perhaps, the best judge of hu-

manity in its present avowedly imperfect condition. All women invariably ask the question, and in the precise form in which we have put it; and yet most women are—for the composite planet in which we happen to live—good women. It is incredible, or at any rate very difficult to conceive, that good women should ask a question of each other habitually, and without blushing, which is downright immoral. We are, therefore, landed in this dilemma: either women have no moral sense, or the question is not such a terrible one after all. Omitting the consideration of the first disagreeable supposition, let us see if cause cannot be shown for thinking that the second one may fairly be entertained. We have already seen that women always regard the news of the engagement of an acquaintance as good news. They are delighted when they hear that one of their sex is going to be married. They have not yet had time to make the inquiry whether it is a good match or a bad one. It is a match, and that is quite sufficient; at least, it is good as far as it goes. But why is it good, even to that extent? The reason must surely be, that they assume a great many things which may or may not exist, but which they are ready to believe do exist, and which, if they do, are calculated to lay the foundation of connubial happiness. They do not ask whether the betrothed pair are adapted to each other, whether they love

each other, whether they have similar tastes, and so forth. They kindly and confidingly assume all this; and, having assumed it, they *then* proceed to ask if this good match—since all matches are thus conceived by them to be good—is an especially good one. What they want to know is, if their friend, who is going to become a wife, is *also* going to become a duchess; if the girl who is being so desperately loved is *likewise* going to have her dresses made by the Court-milliner; if the darling creature who is shortly to be blessed with a good husband will also enjoy certain other good things which husbands occasionally bring with them. They commence by presupposing the spiritual character of the match, and then make their tender inquiries as to its material prospects. They are only too ready to believe that the marriage has been made in heaven; but as married life has to be spent on earth, pray what is the amount of the settlement?

It is just possible that the explanation will not appear to everybody quite conclusive. Men are such suspicious, sensitive, conceited creatures, that it is extremely difficult to satisfy them. There can be no doubt that to the ordinary manly ear the question, "Is it a good match?" has rather an unpleasant sound. It seems to reduce him from the position of a man and a lover—actual or possible—to that of a matrimonial commodity. The better the

man, the more offensive will the question be to him. It has a horribly democratic, levelling ring about it. It seems to assume that all men, *quâ* men, or, at least, *quâ* husbands, are equal, and that the difference between them consists in the relative size of their stables or their capacity for building them. It is true that it pays them the compliment—if our exculpatory explanation be correct — of supposing that they will all be good husbands if they have plenty of money. In a word, it takes them on trust. So apologised for, women may be considered to nourish the devout and flattering creed that all men are worth marrying. As, however, every man cherishes that belief, with a slight modification—viz. in so far as it includes himself, but not at all as it includes all other men—their vanity will not, perhaps, be exorbitantly tickled by this merely general testimony to their merits. It is more agreeable to them to think that if they had hardly a penny in the world, their personal attainments are so numerous and so brilliant that their companionship would make any woman happy, whilst there are some men who would be confoundedly bad matches if they had all the money in the world. But women, as we have seen, are not quite so uncharitable.



THE USE OF DETRIMENTALS.

THE arrangements of modern society are obviously so much more due to artificial than to natural selection, that it would be simply absurd to suppose that any one of its leading features is the result of sheer accident, or of forces so completely beyond our scrutiny and control as to come within the scope of that convenient phrase. When we find anything there habitually and normally, we may be quite sure that it is there by permission, if not absolutely by design. Female rule is not unjustly considered to repose upon somewhat despotic principles; and it is female rule, we are proud to say, which presides over society. The existence within its limits of a large class of men, familiarly known as Detrimentials, is too notorious to be denied. Their usefulness must therefore be presumed. We do not overlook the fact that their very name implies not only precisely the reverse, but would convey the idea that, far from being merely useless, they are positively pernicious. But we may rest assured

that the appellation was attached to them by some ignorant outsider who was not duly instructed in the mysteries of the inner and governing circle. A nickname, once given, has, like dirt, an aptitude for sticking, even though it be completely out of place. Moreover, it is not quite impossible that those who were really aware of its fundamental inappropriateness have only encouraged it for mysterious reasons of their own. Be this as it may, we cannot allow ourselves to be blinded by a mere word. Rigid reasoning ought surely to carry more weight than conventional language. We have no desire to have a quarrel with the "Dictionary," or to run a tilt at so classical a phrase as the one in question. All that we ask is to be allowed to prove that Detrimentials, despite the intrinsic signification of their sobriquet, are perhaps the most useful people of which society can boast.

But before proceeding to rigorous demonstration, we must insist on the less cogent but still valuable argument drawn from probability. We cannot be expected to forego this aid. We therefore beg leave to propound this simple question: If Detrimentials are not of considerable service to society, why are they there? Why are they allowed to cumber the ground? We know that they have the run of our houses in the country and our houses in town, of our dances and our dinner-tables, our preserves and

our croquet-parties; and, save on very rare and critical occasions—such as, say for instance an imminently-dreaded death, or a nervously-hoped-for marriage—they are never denied admission. Is it conceivable that this would long continue to be the case if they really were what they are vulgarly supposed to be? We entertain too high an opinion of the firmness of the guardian angels of society to cherish such a notion for a moment. Those model republicans of antiquity, the Spartans, exposed their feeble offspring to the ordeal of almost certain death; and we believe that equally heroic citizens are yet to be discovered in the South-Sea Islands who despatch their old people when no longer fit either for martial or domestic purposes. We are unwilling, indeed we are unable, to believe that society would be less wanting in the womanly fortitude to get rid of Detrimentials, were Detrimentials verily and truly Detrimentials. Of course it would employ the more lenient methods known to our milder times. The age which cannot quite make up its mind to hang assassins would perhaps scarcely be justified in resorting to violent measures with Detrimentials. But it might, and we are sure would, pronounce at least sentence of banishment upon them. Where there is a will there is a way; and no doubt can exist in any sane mind as to the power of society to get rid of them, if it found them the nuisance which they have been lightly and hastily represented to be.

The truth is, that if Detrimentials were done away with to-morrow, society could not last another season. At any rate, it would be perfectly powerless to perform those noble and necessary functions which are at once its justification and its honour. There would be no more marrying or giving in marriage, yet celestial happiness would perhaps not thereby be proved to have arrived upon the earth. It is of the very essence of Detrimentials, we are thoroughly well aware, not to marry; but what is far more important, they are the cause of marriage in others. Looked at from a serious point of view, they play the part of Moses in the matrimonial world. They lead, and point even, to the promised land, though they are not themselves permitted to enter it. They somewhat resemble guide-posts, continually indicating to the *bonâ-fide* traveller the direction that ought to be taken, whilst their office naturally terminates before the close of the journey. When the way is more than usually perplexing, or the wayfarer more than usually stupid, their assistance is needed to the very last turning-point. Even then, however, "thus far and no further" is the inevitable limit of their approach towards the actual bourne—from which, we may add, no traveller returns. Detrimentials may with equal propriety be likened to decoy-ducks, which, though not worth catching themselves, and too completely part of the game ever to think of being caught, are

the cause of other captures infinitely more valuable. Enjoying the most perfect immunity from any dread of the consequences that will apparently be entailed by their conduct, they plunge at first sight into the most reckless admiration of young ladies of whose birth, education, fortune, and temper, they are wholly ignorant. They seem to fling themselves upon certain death, but in reality—and this they know perfectly well—they are not even food for powder. They say and do the most compromising things without ever compromising themselves. They make pretty and even impassioned speeches, and sometimes venture, if permitted, upon suggestive if not expressive little notes, that would expose them to the risk of heavy damages, in a case of breach of promise, in any court in England. But no such fate ever overtakes them. They bear charmed lives, and are perpetually under female fire without ever being hit. Neither are their attentions and devotions by any means restricted to one object at a time. The creatures of their adoration are legion. They have no preference for blonde or brunette, for auricomus or the raven's wing. They like a parson's daughter just as well as a peer's. The only condition that they make is, that a young lady should be either rather pretty or very amusing. They have time and heart enough for all.

Now look at the result. A moment's reflection

will show us how different it is from what the ignorant imagine. All men, providentially, are not Detrimentials; but all men are subject to the masculine weakness of rivalry where a woman is in question. The girl that is openly admired by men who cannot marry her, and do not want to, will very shortly be admired by men who, if they venture to show their admiration, can be compelled to marry her. The process is extremely simple. A Detrimental begins it. A non-Detrimental, out of envy, or that taste for imitation by no means restricted to apes, speedily follows suit. This puts the Detrimental on his mettle, and he pays the young lady more violent attention than ever. The non-Detrimental, not to be beaten when defeat is so extremely ignominious, enters into downright emulation with "the confounded fellow." The last, having no stake on the table, of course plays the bolder game of the two. Need we add, that boldness—let us modify the phrase, and say confidence—always prevails with the feminine mind? The non-Detrimental loses ground at every turn, and gets flung at every struggle. To the Detrimental, the first waltz and the last. To the non-Detrimental, a quadrille, and a waltz "if she can find one." To the non-Detrimental, on the way to the carriage, the mamma; to the Detrimental, the daughter. Defeat, overwhelming disgraceful defeat, stares the former in the face. But he yet has a trump-card in reserve.

Shall he play it? That last terrible ruff of his adversary, when, in the most irregular way in the world, the latter cuts him out of his legitimate trick at supper, determines him. He proposes, and is accepted. *Après vous, monsieur*, says the Detrimental, now for the first time, and with the blandest grace. We wonder if the horrible thought ever comes across the victor that it is difficult to believe that so amiable and equable a gentleman has really been vanquished. Somebody has, at any rate.

The process, as we have said, is simple; so much so, indeed, that we need scarcely analyse it more minutely. We have made but a hasty sketch, but we think it will be sufficient to prove our thesis. It is clear that Detrimentials are the most beneficent creatures in the world, and that the multiplication of our species could scarcely be carried on without them. Every well-regulated household has always a certain number of them on its staff, just as it has a powdered footman or a kitchenmaid. They cannot conveniently be kept absolutely on the premises, unless they can make themselves out to be cousins; but a thoughtful mother always takes care that they shall be within easy reach of an invitation. They are the most amiable of mortals, and it may be doubted if they are properly rewarded by the mere amount of good dinners and clandestine favours of a more spiritual character which are meted out to them. We

think they are entitled to more substantial guerdons. Long service at least should be requited with something equivalent to a pension or retirement half-pay. The mothers of England ought periodically to present them with testimonials. But gratitude, we fear, is as rare in the maternal as in every other human bosom. Should some Detrimental, who has been the proximate cause of all the girls save one in a family having found husbands, be so rash as to put in a claim before their parent for a trifling compensation, he will probably meet with no more liberal return than the offer of that last wallflower. Since he has failed to get her married, he may marry her himself. *Sic vos non vobis!* Such is the hard case of bees, sheep, and Detrimentials.





THE MANUFACTURE OF HUSBANDS.

I.

IT certainly can no longer be by virtue of any law founded upon the facts of personal experience that we associate female loveliness and charm with rural beauty. What time the greenwood is glorious indeed, even beyond the description given of it by those truest and most loving painters of vernal nature, the early English poets, a man might ride through it all the long May-day, and not meet with a single maiden of high degree and refined grace. The framework is all there, but the picture is wanting. The setting is as faultless as in the days of Chaucer; but the jewels are no longer to be seen. The red thorn has not lost its cunning, nor the lush mellow grass its cool depths of luxuriant sweetness. The cuckoo has not forgotten its note, the larch laid aside its tassels, or the lilac foresworn its scented plumes. But they are

all abandoned by the fair damsels with whom, not only imagination and poetry, but old associations and common habits of thought even, are wont to people them. More than ever do the flowers waste their sweetness on the desert air, and blackbirds pipe in the wilderness. Should there still exist some swain primitive enough to linger amid scenes which everybody else has deserted, he will be forced to avail himself of Byron's melancholy words,

" Spring

Came forth her work of gladness to revive,

With all her reckless birds upon the wing :

I turned from all she brought, to those she could not bring."

In other words, he will have to go up to London to find the young ladies whom he will no longer meet "i' the forest."

How is this? Is our mental association at fault, and do English girls, like the well-known French blue-stockings, abhor the beauties of nature; or is it that, whilst the association which links the two is so true and so profoundly seated that not even the most startling practical violations of it can rid us of its influence, some other temporary law has stepped in to put asunder what nature has joined together? We hold the latter to be the correct explanation. We are simple enough to believe that, other considerations being equal, young ladies would positively prefer grass-plats to pavements, gravel walks

bordered by laurestinus to macadamised streets fringed with lamp-posts, and the notes of the nightingale to the big drum of the band of the Coldstream Guards. But other considerations are not equal, and their inequality is the cause of the "merrie greenwood" being abandoned for the doleful South Kensington. Whatever Mr. Mill may think to the contrary, the keenest, and also the most fitting object of a single woman's ambition is, not the franchise, but a husband. But who wills the end, wills the means; and the women who want husbands must condescend to go where they are to be found. Now man—modern man, at least—is not, like other game, *feræ naturæ*. Being no longer savage, or particularly noble, he does not run wild in the woods. He is very strictly preserved—by himself; but he does not hide his beautiful feathers in covert glades, pluming himself rather in the open sunshine. The best battue to be had of him is not in hazel plantations, but in the various "drives," all of which terminate about Hyde-park Corner. Is it to be wondered at, then, that the sporting members of the female world should listen to the injunction in Scott's *Lord of the Isles*, to "leave the deer, leave the steer," and should "come in their fighting gear" to the appropriate precincts of Mayfair? We think it would be exceedingly surprising if they turned a deaf ear to such excellent advice.

It may be objected that if this is the whole of

our explanation, the difficulty with which we set out at once falls to the ground, since it would seem as though man's, and not woman's, own nature was the *vera causa* of women quitting the country in full and bewitching springtide, and betaking themselves to the dust and colourlessness of London. But it is not the whole of our explanation. Man, though we have already said he is no longer a wild creature, is still a very stupid one, and can be got to take up his *habitat*—just as easily as partridges or pheasants—precisely where it is most convenient to his pursuer to have him. His own instincts, as far as so ductile and manageable an animal can be said to have any, would lead him rather to the banks of trout-streams, dotted with blue forget-me-nots, than to crowded drawing-rooms, where he very rarely cuts even a respectable figure, and then only with the assistance of his tailor and his hairdresser. Examined in what may be called his natural stage, and before it becomes worth anybody's while to do something with him, he haunts solitary places for the most part, and cannot be said to be very gregarious, much less urban, in his proclivities. Whilst still that indefinite thing, a boy, he looks upon a city—when he has once seen all the pantomimes—as rather a bore. Leave him to himself, and he prefers the open moor, the chase, the down, the thicket, the garden, the forest; in a word, rural existence. Nor must it

be supposed that there is in him a latent preference for greater things, which only demands a few years of life for its development. His nature is far too poor for the grand law of development to operate upon. Left to the agencies of natural selection, he would either remain just where he was, or perish outright. It is artificial selection which decides his destiny. Need we say whose artifice it is that turns and trains him from a raw bumpkin into a mature specimen of town elegance—a thing of Bond-street beauty? Lovely woman has never been so forgetful of her obligations as to ask, “Am *I* my brother’s keeper?” We must do her the justice to say that she has never even attempted to shirk the arduous and responsible office.

But, it may be urged, if—according to our allegations—women have a real preference for the country, which they would never dream of quitting when it is in its most lovely dress, save for the necessity of being where the materials out of which husbands are made do mostly congregate; and if the country, furthermore, be the natural *habitat* of this raw material, why should they give themselves the trouble of transferring it to London, where they themselves have no overruling desire to be, instead of manufacturing the required article on the spot? The question is so logical and so appropriate, that it provides us with the solution of which we are in search. The

answer to it is no other than this—that the localities which grow the raw material are not favourable to the production of the manufactured article. Raw cotton is most plentiful on the banks of the Mississippi, but cotton goods on those of the Irwell. Australia provides the wool, but the West Riding it is which turns out woollen fabrics. Similarly the country produces men, but London alone manufactures husbands. The necessary machinery is wanting in the localities which provide the coarse material. In London all the various processes can be conveniently gone through in one great centre, whilst, at the same time, division and coöperation of labour—such familiar requisites in modern days for success in any species of enterprise—can lend their kind aid. In the country a husband must be made, so to speak, by hand, and often by one hand: a form of industry, as everybody knows, at once laborious, risky, and inefficient. In London everybody lends a hand, and society is properly organised for the turning out of husbands by the hundred, the thousand, the million, just as they are required. It will thus be seen at a glance that political and social economy alike demand that the clumsy and sporadic efforts, which alone are possible in rural districts, should be abandoned for the improved method which can be pursued only in a locality dedicated to ingenious and concentrated energy.

But lest this abstract and somewhat scientific mode of exposition should not recommend itself to the favour or conviction of every mind, we will put our meaning into plainer words, and in a more concrete form. We will suppose that a husband is wanted in the country. As we said, the raw material is there on the spot; the neighbourhood is well stocked with men, though of course only some of these are eligible. Moreover, your true matrimonial sports-woman does not fire into the ruck—at mere blind haphazard into a covey. She marks her man, covers him with her double-barrel—herself and her lovely child, that is—and calculates upon bringing him down, and none other. How is she to set about it? She asks him to dinner, we will say. He dines, and let us suppose—improbable supposition—that he dines admirably. In that case—for men, especially in the country, are for the most part abominable *gourmets*—he likes his dinner vastly; but his appreciation of it scarcely advances, and almost retards, the object for which it has been given to him. He is not going to marry the cook; and as a properly-minded young man cannot, or ought not, to have his affections fixed upon two objects at a time, it is very difficult for him to appreciate the dinner and the daughter of the dinner-giver both at one sitting. Addressing the excellent repast in the words which, with but slight variation, the Corsair addressed to

Gulnare, he may justly say, "I cease to love thee when I love *woman-kind*." The better the dinner, the more he will be sure to eat; and the more he eats, the stupider he will be after it, and the more anxious to get to his cigar, if not—ungrateful creature—to drive home and go to bed. Should the dinner be bad, of course he will be so thoroughly out of humour as to be maliciously blind to all the female charms in the world. Even should this Scylla and Charybdis—the danger arising from giving him too good or too bad a dinner—both be avoided, and should he take his leave badly hit by this first shot, he has had time to recover before another can be fired. He goes away, and by the time he is asked to dinner again his condition is just what it was before he had ever been asked at all. Let the invitation in the country be of what sort it will, this same perplexing process of cooling down between times will still be found to hold good. "Then ask the man to stay in the house," somebody will say. In that case he will doubtless make himself quite at home, and, far from being grateful, end by being almost exacting. He uses everything just as if it was his own. He expects to ride your horses, fish your stream, beat your woods,—do anything but make love to your daughter. She, of course, is always there, and can be turned to account at any odd hour. But now is just the moment when the trout will rise,

now just the other moment when the birds will lie, and so on. Even if it rains, it is ten to one that he will be found in the billiard-room, instead of toying with the distaff among the maidens. Now and then, when he happens to be a little indolent, he will perhaps condescend to sit in a leafy arbour with the young lady, and read Tennyson with her for two or three hours. What if he does? He will only prove to have been, in words which the Laureate himself provides,

"The summer pilot of an empty heart
Unto the shores of——nothing."

When he has had enough of that sort of thing, he will tip the servants handsomely, pack up his things, and depart. If very stupid, he will not at all perceive how exceedingly badly he has behaved; if only rather stupid, he will perhaps slightly comprehend the "irony of the situation," will profanely exclaim in the words of the Psalmist, *Laqueus contritus est et nos liberati sumus*, and will always speak kindly of "that—ha, yes!—nice little girl," whom he did *not* marry. They manage these things better in London. *How* they manage them we will proceed to show.

II.

WE have just pointed out the serious disadvantages under which the country labours in the production of that important article for which the demand never ceases and very rarely even slackens—the eligible husband. That the raw material out of which he is made abounds in the rural districts is confessed; but we have shown how the working of it up into the necessary fabric for domestic use encounters almost insuperable obstacles in the localities where it naturally grows. “The country,” we said, “produces men, but London alone manufactures husbands.” We explained how the former fails in the second and more important process. It remains for us to see how it is that the latter supplies the deficiency.

Let us, then, like Melibœus, quit bucolic scenes, and leave poor Tityrus, if he thinks fit, to make the woods resound with the name of Amaryllis, who is much too far away to hear him. She is in London, and so is everybody else. It is the height of the season, and the manufacture of husbands proceeds apace. The raw material has been brought up to the great matrimonial centre, has been sorted, carded, and combed, so to speak, and is now awaiting the further processes through which it has to go before it receives the final operation of all, can be

considered as finished, and may be labelled "sold." Dropping metaphors and analogies, which, however perfect they may be, do not convey all the meaning to ordinary minds which is impressed by plainer speech, we will suppose that selection has been made of some proper masculine person for the future duties of married life by a feminine judge of undoubted capacity. There is not the slightest necessity, as there was in the country, to ask him to dinner. London is proverbially inhospitable, and nobody thinks of giving dinner-parties there, unless it be politicians and lawyers. Love-making in London has nothing to do with such vile mechanical arts. Besides, even if dinner-giving were desirable, nine times out of ten it would be next to impossible. The joyful mother of children has left a handsome establishment in the country, and is putting up with very inferior accommodation in town for an ulterior object—the object we are all along considering. Fortunately, as we say, the object can be furthered without any base imitation of blundering country manners. A beloved Sovereign has provided a Hyde Park and the Row; a generous nation has supplied the Horticultural Gardens; and an emulous community has prepared a nightly succession of balls, soirées, concerts, and such-like convenient festivities, all of which conspire towards the realisation of the great central idea of life—the procuring suitable

mates for the fledgelings of the year. Everybody and everything assist everybody and everything else. We visit and are visited in turn. The vigour of all allows no one's ardour to slacken. A town life, in full swing, resembles a country dance; we are always meeting each other again. No time for "cooling-down" now. To-night, an hour in an opera-box, and a couple of hours more at somebody's assembly. To-morrow, at noon, nods and glances, trim riding-habits, and provokingly-sudden good-byes in the Park. Towards five o'clock, salutations in Bond-street, from the exciting distance of carriage-cushions, flashing past in an instant. Again, about seven, an encounter in the Park, perhaps under the trees, perhaps in a carriage drawn up at the railings, and detained by a block caused by everybody, and of which everybody is wondering who can possibly be the cause. Towards midnight, the ball of the season—how many of them there are!—at which the whole world is present. And so on, and so on. Talk of "cooling-down" under such circumstances! It is impossible. Admiration has long been left behind, and even the warmth of the suitor no longer registers the true condition of the thermometric heart. Engagement-heat is arrived at, with the expenditure of very little fuel on the part of the triumphant operator, who in the country might have burnt up every stick on the ancestral

premises without even raising the swain's ardour above "temperate."

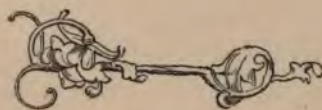
Of course there must be moments even in London when there is a pause, a suspension of labour, and when the operations of which we have spoken must perforce be intermitted. But the pause is short, the suspension brief, and work is resumed before time has been allowed for an injury to be done to the article undergoing manufacture, by a break in the process. In the country, as we saw, a man passing through the stages which are intended to lead to matrimony is allowed to be idle and run back again. But in London, the very "between times" assist the process. They are just long enough to make him consciously remember and dwell upon the pleasant scenes in which he has recently been a leading actor, but never long enough to enable him to forget them. He longs to be again in the arena, and before the longing has time to wear off, he finds his wishes gratified. His imagination is stimulated by these brief interludes, just as our imagination and curiosity are stimulated at a theatre by the temporary fall of the drop-scene. He is indulged in those judiciously-measured absences which make the heart grow fonder, never in those inadvertently—or in the country, inevitably—prolonged ones which make it fickle. He is thrown upon the resources of his club for just that number of hours

during the week which will make him find it dull and tedious, never for that longer time which might possibly drive him into finding it a consolation and even a necessity. Just as he is allowed to snatch fearful and intermittent joys, so is he permitted to undergo dreaded and intermittent miseries. He is not yet enabled to live with the object of his fired fancy, but they who are managing his development take good care that he should not discover, by too great a lull or separation, that he might possibly be able to live without her. Nor must we forget that that mighty agent in the success of all manufactures, emulation, is brought to bear upon him at every stage. During working hours or resting ones, in the park or at the club, in halls of dazzling light, or whilst condemned to the shade of his own chambers, he never can feel sure that he is not being "cut out" by some more favoured rival. Indeed, during the active time of the operation he is made to see and feel, or the conductors of it must be very clumsy, that he is hard-pressed by several competitors. It can be easily understood how the "between times" of which we have spoken act under such circumstances very differently from the manner in which they operate in the country. They actually become elements of the noble industry. Present or absent, he never can cool down. Thus combination, coöperation, rivalry, a due division of labour, and

the requisite machinery, speedily bring about the desired end.

Nor is it one husband only that has been produced. Hundreds, thousands of husbands, have been manufactured at the same time, by the same process, and with one and the same expenditure. As in all manufacture based upon sound principles, production has been rapid, large, and economical. Neither labour nor capital has been wasted. There have been no extravagant banquets, ending in rude disappointment, no reckless picnics terminating in barren flirtation. The insolent song of the Psalmist can no longer be sung, for the game is in the net of the snarer, and will be set free never again. There have been no futile readings of Tennyson in shady corners, no purposeless toyings with the poets, just to while away the tedium of a too-long summer day. There is more matrimonial virtue in a Greenwich dinner—given of course at the alien expense of some rich *parvenu* financier—than in all the sentimental verses that were ever written. Heroes may perish from memory, for lack of the *vates sacer*; but Hymen, if we must needs tell the truth, lies under no obligation to the troubadour's tricks. Business is business, and the manufacture of husbands is a serious practical affair, which, like other productive enterprises, demands forethought, energy, mechanism, coöperation, and all the other indispensable con-

ditions familiar to the manufacturing mind. Hence that great centre of matrimonial industry, the West-end of London, an end which certainly justifies its means. It unpeoples the woods, and the lawns, and the variegated parterres, just when these are arrayed more surpassingly than Solomon in all his glory. It strips the country of a crowning charm, it divorces female beauty from rural loveliness, purity, and grace, and plays sad havoc with our oldest and most cherished associations. But it gives us husbands. It civilises that otherwise indomitable savage, man. It answers the question of a profound economist, and shows us what we are to do with our raw material. The days of handloom-weaving in remote villages are gone for ever, and so are those of husband-making by solitary effort in rural districts. Surprise is often expressed that London should be crowded, and the country be deserted, just when the latter is looking its loveliest. We have provided a solution of the difficulty which ought to satisfy every practical and philosophic mind.





HUSBANDS IN SOCIETY.

BOTH the pious and the scientific mind alike are prone to believe that nothing in creation is without its special and allotted use. We would not, therefore, willingly abandon the hope that husbands have their function in society, since they are found there in such abundance. Yet the task of discovering what it is by no means easy. They cannot assist one's investigations, since, if the question be directly put to them, they are quite unable to give any satisfactory account of themselves. Looked at where one so constantly meets them, they have, seemingly, no *raison d'être*. Their usefulness certainly does not lie on the surface. They occupy space where space is of supreme importance, and where we cannot say that the necessity for their occupying it is reduced to a minimum, inasmuch as for their doing so there is no obvious necessity at all. We must therefore plunge below the surface, and see if we can extract from an examination of their internal feelings a reason for

their social ubiquity, which does not strike one on a mere perception of the external phenomena.

In the first place, is it just possible that they like to be there? Could the reply be a decided affirmative the difficulty would vanish, for the gratification of so large a proportion of the human species, even if obtained at the cost of incommoding another and more important section of it, would be to the philanthropic mind a sufficient justification. In this instance we should feel compelled to accept the *dulce* as synonymous with the *utile*. The agreeable would justify itself. As husbands can be expected to be happy so rarely and under such very exceptional circumstances, it would be unjust to challenge the utility of making things a little pleasant to them now and then. Even Cabinet Ministers are permitted a Greenwich dinner once a year, and the domestic administrator ought not to be begrudged an occasional relaxation from the cares of the hearth if he wishes it. But does he wish it? Is it credible that he likes to be flattened against a wall, at that very period of life when, looked at corporeally, he is beginning to be most expansive? Can a man, who has laid aside the elastic ambitions of boyhood, and no longer cares to figure as a noted gymnast, have a positive preference for being bent double, and suspended over the banisters of a friend's staircase? Are we to believe that a person who has lately been spending a good slice of his patrimony in

stocking his own premises with easy-chairs and sybaritic couches, spontaneously and for his own pleasure forces himself into scenes where the chances are a thousand to one against his being allowed to retain a seat of any sort in peace for five minutes? The British husband, we are ready to allow, is a person of very considerable merit; and if we were asked, in these easy-going and luxury-loving days, What is virtue? we think we should point to him and exclaim, "If you wish to behold real virtue, look there!" Still, with all our admiration for him, we have never hitherto regarded him quite as a fakir. He suffereth much, believeth much, and without, perhaps, hoping very much, he is not easily cast down; but we doubt if he or any European, visible in society, have yet arrived at that pitch of perfection in which his pain is his pleasure, his misery his joy, and having his corns trodden on and his tie ruthlessly ruffled, lands him in the seventh heaven of delight. He is, in society at least, of a contemplative order of mind, action being indeed denied to him even if he coveted it; but we have not sufficient grounds for believing that he is, even there, absolutely ascetical from choice. Simeon Stylites on the top of his pillar could not possibly be a more lonely and secluded object than he sometimes appears to be as we stumble over him or elbow him out of the way at the bottom of a staircase. But the fact, frequently noticeable, that he

has either just emerged from the buffet or is just on the point of making a fresh pilgrimage to it, negatives the idea that he is wholly and resolutely eremitical in his tendencies; and the figure which he cuts at supper scarcely bespeaks him ready as yet to be enrolled as a holy anchorite, save in a sense which would not have been accepted in the truest period of monasticism. Virtuous he undoubtedly is, in spite of still sharing in these trivial failings which flesh is heir to; but he cannot be said to be so far advanced in grace as to be pictured exclaiming, "Evil, be thou my good!" and choosing to spend five hours in the byeways of a ball-room for the celestial felicity of being exceedingly miserable.

For the more deeply we investigate the matter the more vividly shall we be impressed with the inevitable conclusion that his mental enjoyment in these halls of dazzling light is, to say the least of it, quite as questionable as his physical. When Sir Robert Walpole, after being made Earl of Orford, first met Pulteney, also promoted to the peerage, in the body of the House, he is said to have addressed his great rival, with that bluntness of speech for which he was notorious, thus: "Well, here we are, my lord, the two most insignificant men in the country." In some such words can we fancy a once-popular Strephon addressing a rival Tityrus, on their first encounter, after the marriage of each, in scenes

where they had but recently struggled for mastery. The places which lately hailed them as protagonists now barely tolerate them as supernumeraries. Even before they arrive on the ground they are made to feel the difference of their present position from what it used to be. In former times, a formal and written invitation was scarcely deemed sufficient to allure them. If the givers of it met them in the interval between issue and acceptance, they were seized upon and absolutely importuned. "O, you *must* come; we cannot do without you," was the sweet flattery by which their presence was made—quite unnecessarily—doubly sure. But now, either the barest invitation is sufficient, or, if it be followed up by oral importunity, they are made to understand that it is their wives' presence which is required, not their own; and that if they are asked, it is not because they are wanted, but because they cannot safely be passed over. When the fatal evening arrives, how often must the husband recur in thought to the pleasant past! He wanders about the scenes of bygone triumphs. He feels that he is no longer in the running. He has been scratched. Like a follower of Ignatius Loyola, he is "in the world, but not of it." When the cry goes forth, *Messieurs et Mesdames, faites votre jeu*, he has nothing to put down. He is excluded from the game, for he has nothing at stake. Only let him try to recover the ground which he has ap-

parently lost, and he will soon be convinced of the futility of the attempt. He used to be thought a wit, and the obsequious maidens laughed almost before the joke passed his lips. Now he may say the cleverest thing in the world, and nobody will so much as smile. If he have not suddenly become the dullest of dull dogs, he is treated as though he had. He is the beggared Belisarius of the ball-room, to whom not a single *obolus* falls of all the good things that are going about. He realises Byron's admirable description, in *Childe Harold*, of real loneliness. There are

"None who, with kindred consciousness endued,
If he were not, would seem to smile the less,
Of all that followed, flattered, sought, and sued."

And of his position it may with unerring justice be said,

"This is to be alone: this—this is solitude."

What wonder if, "with none to bless him, none whom he can bless," he should again seek the "shady scene of the supper-room," "lean o'er the foaming falls" of Roederer's champagne, and comfort himself with St. Bernard's saying of "*Nunquam minus solus quam cum solus*"?

"This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold
Converse with Gunter's charms, and view his stores unrolled."

But even here, when he is emulating the philo-

sophic mouse, that, disgusted with the world, retired into a cheese, he must be cautious. He must not indulge too freely in this falsely-called solitude. Let him beware of "drowning it in the bowl." He did not come hither alone, and alone he will not depart. His wife is—well, somewhere about; and though, therefore, on the principle of *ubi uxor ibi domus*, he feels himself thoroughly at home, he must not do everything he would like to do. He must watch and wait, even if he have not the pluck to proffer a prayer for departure; for he knows not the time nor the hour when that happy moment will arrive. Should his spirits and power of sustained hypocrisy desert him, it is just possible that his forlorn condition may excite a spark of momentary compassion in the breast of the busy hostess, one of whose daughters, with whom he used to dance and flirt, he has *not* married, and from whom he cannot, therefore, expect any special good turn. Still, as we say, his appearance may be so pitiable that she may possibly relent, and kindly ask him if he would not like to "make a fourth at whist." It is a critical moment. Should he refuse, he will, perhaps, never again have the alternative offered to him. He will be ranked among those stupid people who "do not play." Should he in desperation close with the offer, his social position is settled for life. *Vestigia nulla retrorsum*. He will not be able in future to snatch those furtive joys to which

we have already alluded, for he "is a good hand at a rubber." Should he lose and make a confession of his losses on the way home, his wife, however, will probably not think so. Should he win, his winnings will of course go towards replenishing her wardrobe, injured by the pleasant perils of the evening, so as to enable both of them to repeat the performance "to-morrow night." And even should he escape "that last infirmity of noble minds," the whist-table, he can at least console himself with the reflection that, if society has insisted on his being ridiculous, it is out of a sheer well-meaning desire that his wife may escape from a similar imputation. He surely would not be less good-natured than the community which, after all, turns him to such excellent purpose. Of course he can abjure good-nature altogether, if he chooses, and stay at home, insisting upon his wife staying with him. But then he is no longer a husband in society. In that case he is "a brute."





SHOULD MARRIED WOMEN DANCE?

IT is quite possible that certain people, seeing the above question, will feel disposed to reply that, as far as dancing is concerned, a married woman has only to please herself. No doubt the liberal individuals who take this view would, if subjected to pressure, admit that she ought also to consult the wishes of her husband. We have no desire, however, to press that point. Fortunately, husbands are not yet regarded, on this side the Channel, as exclusively ludicrous objects, or as mere studies for the more humoristic scenes of a new comedy. They would certainly become such, in our opinion, if they attempted to control their wives in any such matter as dancing. A man who would strive to prevent his wife from dancing, if she wished to do so, would be both a churl and an ass. Nothing seems clearer to us than that the question we have propounded must be settled by women themselves. But it does not at all follow, because their free-will is to be the final judge, that

they have nothing to take into consideration beyond their own tastes and inclinations. Doing as you please is, on the whole, perhaps a better guide and rule of life than doing as other people please; but doing as you ought is a better one still. Even married women may have duties to themselves, to their condition, and likewise to society, which it may be exceedingly unadvisable for society, or any external authority, to attempt to enforce. Indeed, having altogether rejected marital injunctions on this score, we can scarcely appeal to any other sanction. Our question, therefore, really is, Should married women, left entirely to their own discretion, elect to indulge in one of the pastimes of their girlish life, or thenceforth to renounce it?

Nothing is more certain than that a charming girl does not become any less charming because she gets married. The presumption is quite the other way; and it will usually be found that facts are in harmony with the presumption. There are many reasons why this should be the case. In the first place, true love, when it does run smooth, is a very great beautifier. A fashionable journal, when it talks of the lovely and accomplished bride, is not altogether so wrong in the employment of the first epithet at least, as superficial cynics—fully as conventional in their sneers as the paper is in its optimism—jantly suppose. “Unhappy the man,”

exclaims Lamartine, "who has not been a poet once in his life." Still more unhappy, may we be allowed to add, the woman who has not been beautiful once in hers. If she has been ardently loved, and has ardently responded to the affection, she cannot possibly have failed in having been so. We are not speaking of the eyes of her lover; we are speaking of those of the whole world—always excepting the cynic, who misses what is patent to the eyes of people whose blindness he is good enough to commiserate. There is an intimate connection between happiness and beauty; and girls avowedly plain assume for the time a beauty never before disclosed as their own. Of course, even love cannot make anybody beautiful for ever. That is the precious secret of Madame Rachel. Still, all fine observers have remarked this special, if fugitive, effect of a genuine love-match. Nor does it pass away all at once. It dies indulgently, and almost imperceptibly. Whilst it lasts, it gives an indescribable loveliness to the look. From this natural charm to one so artificial as that of dress, the drop, no doubt, is great indeed. Nevertheless, the advantage which the married woman has over the girl, in this respect, must not be overlooked. What said Enid's mother?

"For though I heard him call you fairest fair,
Let never maiden think, how ever fair,
She is not fairer in new clothes than old."

We do not mean to insinuate that girls are dressed in old clothes, and that married women alone go about in new ones; but the latter are confessedly allowed a superiority in respect to dress, which is too universally acknowledged for there to be any obligation on our part to insist upon it at length. A third particular, in which a woman just married enjoys a decided advantage over those of her sex who have still all the world before them, is that of conversation. Far be it from us to countenance a perhaps too prevalent idea, that married women may assume greater latitude in the topics of discourse with men than they formerly dreamed of permitting themselves. "What is not fit to be said before women," says Thackeray, "is probably not fit to be said at all." We may extend the observation, and remark that what is not fit to be said by a girl is not fit to be said by any woman. We refer rather to the readiness, the ease, the entire absence of hope, dread, suspicion, with which a conversation may be plunged into by the one, all of which are necessarily denied to the other. It is the simple truth—and there is nothing to be regretted or annoyed at in its being so—that the two main and most frequent considerations in a girl's mind are, if she shall ever be married, and, if so, whom she is likely to marry. A certain amount of self-consciousness, timidity, and caution must be the result of this condition of mind. These, however,

are not the qualities which make conversation enthralling, or—certain aims apart—a companion pre-eminently fascinating. It is scarcely a reproach to a girl that she is not particularly amusing, for any great length of time, to a man who is not making love to her. On the contrary, if a married woman is not entertaining under analogous circumstances, the reason probably is that she is inherently stupid.

But what has all this got to do with dancing? More than at first sight appears. It has been seen that such a married woman as we have been describing has three notable advantages over girls. Our question is, Shall she use against them, in a ball-room, the strength which the possession of such advantages confers? Love apart, it is plain that she will be more sought after as a partner than most of them can hope to be. But why are they there? Precisely in order that they may be sought after. We do not say that the girls themselves consciously and of set purpose go there with that aim. But their parents, their chaperones, their friends, in fact, society in general, conducts them to ball-rooms, and arranges for their being periodically conducted thither, for that end and for hardly any other. Balls may be execrably bad and inefficient machinery for getting girls satisfactorily married; but that they are a species of matrimonial agency, no ingenuous person will deny; and as long as no better or more acceptable scheme

can be devised, people must take the means which is at their disposal for the attainment of a common and laudable end. It is evident, therefore, that the married woman who competes with girls in that particular arena, besides turning the latter to a purpose for which it was not originally, and never can be principally, intended, robs them of that fair chance of which she herself has already manifestly reaped the proper benefits. Bearing about her, as she does, the proud marks of a definitive triumph, she ought, if she insists on running again, to be duly weighted before being allowed to start. On the contrary, as we have seen, she enters under positive advantages. Is it generous—is it even just—on her part, to participate in a contest in which she is so unevenly matched? There is something almost unseemly in the spectacle of half-a-dozen young married women walking off with some of the best partners in the room, whilst a row of girls are sitting neglected against the wall. Neither ignorance nor thoughtlessness can be pleaded in excuse. Women thoroughly know women, whatever else they may know; and there is not one of them that is not vividly conscious of what heart-burning it causes to a poor girl to hear the music and watch the many-twinkling feet of a ball-room, and play the almost ignominious part of passive spectator. Grown-up women clutching at all the toys or sweetmeats off

a Christmas-tree at a juvenile party would not be a more unnatural spectacle. Grown-up men eager to win the stakes at a round game got up for lads home for the holidays would not be more cruel or inhuman. We are constrained to plead for tenderness and consideration on the part of young women who are married towards young women who are not. Might not Sidney's words, as he handed the draught of water to the dying soldier at Lützen, be profitably remembered? "Thy need is greater than mine." Sidney had need of it too. What need has a married woman of dancing partners at all? Women sometimes complain that they have no mission, and that the field of action is selfishly closed against them. A married woman ought to have no grounds for such a complaint. But if she insists on it that she has, we are ready with a reply. Her mission, amongst other things, is to be kind and good to girls who are not yet as fortunate as herself. She ought to fancy them perpetually saying to her, "Such as I am, you once were." We do not want young married women to turn match-makers. But we do want them to forward the cause that they themselves once thought so good, as their present condition testifies. They should regard themselves as positively retained for the prosecution of the chief happiness and destiny of their sex. They can do so much towards it, if they only will. Unfortunately, they can do so much to

oppose or retard it; and they do it by infesting ball-rooms, and walking off with partners under the very eyes of girls who, of course, are in the very sorest need of them.

This is the chivalrous view of the question, it may be said, though we think it requires no great stretch of female chivalry to act up to it. Rather should we be inclined to call it the social aspect of the question. But it has its self-regarding one as well. For a few years—ordinarily, for a very few—the married woman may, if she will, indulge and exult in her comparative superiority. If she does so, however, it is at her peril. Before the game is over, she will suffer as much mortification as ever she inflicted. Sooner or later, the time comes when she is no longer regarded as the desirable partner she once was; and by and by the plainest unmarried girl in the room will be preferred to her. For a time, old friends will continue to ask her to dance—say once, each of them, in an evening. Men are usually delicate and considerate in such matters, and for “auld lang syne,” and not to wound her, they will make what they regard as a sacrifice. But even masculine delicacy and consideration have their limits, and the period at length arrives when they ask her no more. She has long perceived that the tide of admiration is ebbing away from her, and she finally finds herself landed, high and dry, on that

dreary bit of ground where wallflowers most do congregate. Had she but renounced in time what is now renouncing her! But it is too late. She cannot plead that she does not dance, for nobody asks. She hopes against hope—as she once made others hope, with similar feelings—and thinks that, to-night at least, some of her old admirers will find her out and give her back her youth, by whirling her round in a good galop! In vain! She has manufactured for herself a sort of beauty-dial, an accurate measurement of the radiance of her own charms; and she sees, convincingly demonstrated, that her sun has set for ever. We have hurried over her decline—which is in reality a somewhat slow one—we find it so exceedingly painful. Her belief in the continued existence of her charms dies a lingering death, every fresh step towards its dissolution being more and more harrowing. St. Evremond says, that the last sighs of a handsome woman are rather for the loss of her beauty than for the loss of her life. But why should she ever have to heave them? Why should she ever know that her beauty is dying? She need not, unless she goes out of the way to provide herself with such a pitiless register as we have described. A time must inevitably come when she will be obliged to give up dancing. Would she not do well to give it up at the particular juncture when she can offer the best of reasons for doing so,

and can plead her new dignity as her sufficient excuse? Men will still press her to dance, and she cannot fail to be slightly gratified by their opportunity. But if she is steady in gracious refusal, they will cease asking her, and long before anybody could possibly suppose that they would not be pleased and flattered by her assent. They will be a little disappointed at her firmness, but in their hearts they will esteem her all the more for it. This might lead us on to another argument in favour of the conduct we have been advocating; indeed, there are several other considerations which we have forborne to urge. We have preferred to restrict ourselves to the consideration of two motives, one of which appeals to charity, and the other to self-interest. In pressing both, we have found a fresh illustration of that profound truth, so well expressed in Pope's line, "That true self-love and social are the same." The married woman who abstains from dancing shows exquisite consideration for the feelings of others, and, in the long-run, perhaps in a still greater degree, spares her own.





FALSE JEWELLERY.



THE times are considerably changed since the wearing of false jewellery was supposed to be limited to the shop-girls, mill-hands, and servant-maids of Western Europe, or of the Northern Continent of America. The peasant-women of Tuscany, no longer confining their urban travels to the Ponte Vecchio, wander as far as the Via dei Tornabuoni in their search for finery, and prefer to spend their earnings on spurious gimcracks fresh from the Palais Royal, rather than on the genuine relics of their ancient Florence; whilst the ladies of London, in adopting the sumptuary tastes of their domestics, are by no means obliged to go as far East as the Lowther Arcade in order to gratify them. With plastic adaptation to the new requirements of its fashionable patrons, Bond-street now glitters with false jewellery, and glories in what it once would have deemed its shame. The rule has become so general, and the exceptions are so infinitesimally few, that we

may fairly say everybody nowadays wears false jewellery; that is, they bedeck their persons with gold which is not gold, and with precious stones that are not stones at all, but either composition or what may generically be called glass. Nor must it be supposed that the custom is confined to those who cannot afford to pay for what is real. False jewellery is largely bought by ladies who not only are well able to buy genuine, but the genuine and the false are worn indiscriminately, and at the same time, by one and the same person. The false is made to eke out the real. Thus, on a lady's left wrist there shall be a bracelet of twisted gold worth sixty or seventy pounds, and on her right a plain broad belt of what equally seems to be gold, chastely studded with what appear to be valuable stones, but, in reality, worth only thirty or thirty-five shillings. In her ears shall be diamond pendants of the first water; whilst, with a certain appropriateness, the comb which surmounts her supposititious back-hair glistens with a brightness fully as dazzling, but not quite so costly. To-day your guest will make her appearance at dinner in a parure of family gems, set long before the goldsmith had reached his present exalted pitch of civilised dexterity; to-morrow she shall honour you with a display, if anything still more gorgeous, which she purchased last week with a five-pound note, receiving a considerable sum back

by way of change. We are here speaking of married women. Girls, we believe, now usually, aspire to the possession of little else than false jewellery. Matrons who already happen to have the blended products of Peru and Golconda do but agreeably vary these with the wealth of Bond-street and the Burlington Arcade ; but maidens, knowing how very little way fifty pounds go in the purchase of the former articles, much prefer that whatever money is to be dedicated on their behalf to personal ornamentation should be expended wholly on the latter. They thereby possess various "sets" of ornaments, and are enabled to ring the changes, day by day, on the several lovely things with which an exceedingly modest outlay has provided them. Thus we see that false jewellery, entering into competition with real in the ranks even of the highest classes, has got itself admitted on terms of perfect equality with the married section of it, and with the unmarried section has driven its rival almost entirely off the field.

These are nothing but undeniable and well-known facts, stated without any exaggeration. Are they blameworthy or innocent? Is the wearing of false jewellery, either wholly or in part, a thing to be discountenanced, reprobated, and despised? Or is it a perfectly legitimate and indifferent practice? These are questions not so easily or conclusively

answered, even from the theoretical point of view, as is generally supposed. In the first place, why do ladies wear jewellery at all? We imagine that the ready spontaneous answer on the part of most people would be, because it is both beautiful in itself and beautifying to the person who wears it. Be it so. In that case, however, is it possible to object to false jewellery, provided that its simulation of reality be complete, and to all but skilled eyes undistinguishable? That it is so is surely proved by the fact we have stated, that ladies wear it along with their genuine ornaments. They positively put the two together, side by side, on their persons, and defy the public to tell the one from the other. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that if one be beautiful and beautifying, the other is beautiful and beautifying, and the *raison d'être* of the first becomes the *raison d'être* of the second, which thus needs no further justification. The time was, and not very long ago, when most false jewellery was designed in execrably bad taste; but this plea can no longer be advanced. The truth now lies rather the other way. Probably the greater portion of it would be declared, by average judges, to be in exceedingly good taste; whilst a large amount of old-fashioned genuine jewellery would be pronounced by perfectly impartial people to be remarkably ugly. Indeed, we feel satisfied that if some unsophisticated artist, who did not know

of the existence of such a thing as imitation ornaments, were asked to choose, on the score of beauty, and even of probable value, between many a spurious modern bracelet and many a genuine gold one, made forty or fifty years ago, he would, nineteen times out of twenty, unhesitatingly select the former. Such being the case, those who maintain the "beautiful and beautifying" theory have no tenable ground in their crusade against the thriving New Bond-street industry.

But, it may be urged, if the wearing of false jewellery be encouraged, so cheap is it that everybody will be able to wear splendid ornaments, or what look like splendid ornaments. A merchant's or professional man's wife can and will have ornaments as pretentious as those of a peeress; the milliner, ornaments as dazzling as those of the marchioness; and so on throughout the social scale. The assertion is perfectly true; but what does it prove in regard to the question we are considering? It proves this: that they who use it as an argument are of opinion that jewellery is and may justifiably be worn, not because it is "beautiful and beautifying," but because it is a mark of social superiority. But what sort of social superiority? The social superiority that consists in the possession of a larger amount of money. Is that to be the reason why false jewellery is not to be worn? Is all jewel-

lery to be genuine simply because it is costly, and in order that one set of people—very often vulgar, uneducated, profoundly inferior people—who happen to have inherited or to have made a huge fortune, should lord it externally over another set—very often highly educated, refined, profoundly superior people—who happen to have inherited a small one, and who would on no account consent to devote their whole lives to turning it into a big one? If this is to be the reason, all we can say is, that it is snobism paramount and rampant. If we add it to the argument—already taken into account—that jewellery is worn because it is “beautiful and beautifying,” the position of those who would contend against the wearing of false jewellery becomes even more untenable. What! Is the wearing of that which is beautiful and beautifying to be confined to those who can pay a high price for it, and to be denied to those who cannot, whilst the means of beautifying themselves cheaply is at their very doors? If that is to be the final ground of the objection, *solvitur ambulando*—it will be set at rest by the latter walking straight off to Bond-street and buying the beautifying objects in dispute. “Tell her she shines me down,” says Guinevere, when, jealous of Elaine, she refuses the “nine-years-fought-for diamonds,” and indignantly advises Lancelot to deck his “new fancy” with them. But who on earth would sit

quietly and be "shone down" by the very best diamonds from the Brazils, even though they cost half-a-million of money, if equally "shining" paste, that could not be distinguished from them, were to be had round the corner for an old song? We do not say they could; we are putting an extreme case; but there are other cases, as we have seen, in which the reasoning which we are pressing holds good, both theoretically and practically. Women are by no means great levellers, and their capacity for self-denial is proverbial; but it is rather too strong a proposition to ask the comparatively penniless amongst them to abstain from beautifying themselves, lest they should put themselves on an apparent footing with great heiresses. The latter have a considerable advantage over them quite independently of any "beautifying" process, and we should, therefore, be all the more inclined to tolerate any little arts by which they might attempt, in some degree, to redress the inequality. But to add one injustice on the top of another would surely be more than monstrous.

It should be understood that we have only been combating the arguments that are habitually and conventionally used against false jewellery, and showing how utterly worthless they really are. But it does not at all follow that other reasons could not be adduced of more solid and convincing potency. The

soul of an honest man, and we should think equally of an honest woman, naturally rebels against anything that professes to be what it is not. Many regard false jewellery as a species of tacit deception, and would inveigh against it chiefly on that high moral ground. Nor do we see any answer to their strictures. If the practice is to escape the reprobation of finer and more scrupulous natures, it must be carried still further; in fact, as far as ever it can be made to go. Imitation gold and imitation gems must supersede real gold and real gems altogether, and everybody must understand that they have done so. To a certain extent, as we have seen, they have already accomplished that feat. Girls, for the most part, are beginning to rejoice almost exclusively in false jewellery. Married women are yielding a modified homage, and they have only to be logical in order to yield entirely. The matter would then, at least, be on a satisfactory footing. As it stands at present, it is real jewellery which stands in the way of a logical adjustment. Let there once be no real gold and no real stones worn by way of ornament, and there could then be nothing that could fairly be called false gold or false stones. There could be no sham where there was no deception. Jewellery would then be like any other kind of personal decoration, responsible only for its phenomenal qualities. All that could then be expected of it

would be, that it should be "beautiful and beautifying." The real jewellery now in existence could be disposed of, and if its present possessors wished to be very patriotic, they might, mindful of the precedent of the Prussian ladies in the Napoleonic war, defray with its proceeds the cost of the next Abyssinian Expedition. Of course, charity begins at home, and any of our distinguished houses, whose finances have been recently complicated by the generous temerity of an inexperienced "plunger," might justifiably employ the proceeds of the sale of the family jewels in the redemption of the family estate. If it be objected that, real jewellery being no longer worn at all, there would be no market for it, and that what exists could not profitably be got rid of, the answer is simple. It could easily be sold to more barbarous nations, who have not yet attained that high pitch of civilisation in which appearances are made to take the place of realities.





FOR WHOM DO WOMEN DRESS?

COMMENTING upon a recent article in the *Cornhill Magazine*, our impetuous contemporary, the *Spectator*, thinks to settle half, if not the whole, of the question to which the article is devoted, by the assertion that "women dress to please men." We fear the *Spectator* knows as much about women as it does about the aristocracy, the agricultural labourer, and various other topics, concerning which it discourses every week with such entertaining but infelicitous confidence. If there be one thing certain in this world, it is that women do not dress to please men, but partly to please themselves, and mainly to please—or, if the cynic prefers it, to displease—each other. A thing, however, may be indisputably true without its truth being universally recognised. Did our contemporary stand alone in its fallacious opinion, we should not feel called upon to controvert it. But as the opinion therein expressed is the echo of a conventional idea hastily assumed, and not unfre-

quently expressed elsewhere, it may be as well to point out how totally devoid of foundation it really is.

That women dress to please men is not only not true, it is the very reverse of the truth. They dress even at the risk of displeasing men—knowing that they have several very different arts at their disposal, with which, if it be necessary, those noble savages can be propitiated. The difference of opinion that exists between men and women, as to what constitutes merit in the costume of the latter, is profound and irreconcilable. The simple is man's highest ideal in the matter; woman's highest ideal is the superb. The poet would decorate her with shells, with flowers, with acorns, with dewdrops, with rainbows, with nothing. She would decorate herself, and, in spite of his prejudices, does decorate herself, with gold, with precious stones, with fur, with lace, with everything. Sandals are all that he ever dreams of putting on her dainty feet; she swathes them in satin. He thinks her more beautiful than all raiment; she would array herself like Solomon in all his glory. He never admires her so much as when her garments chastely drape, but honestly indicate, her form; she is never so highly gratified with herself as when her figure is travestied and obscured, and the combined skill of her milliner and her maid have turned her into a movable clothes-horse. When do men think women look best? On

horseback. When do women themselves think they look best? In a ball-room. Neither are women in the slightest degree ignorant of this divergence of sentiment. They are perfectly well acquainted with the masculine opinion, only they prefer to disregard it in deference to that of each other. Let a woman know that she is going somewhere where she will meet only men, and see how differently she will dress herself from the way in which she does if she be going where she is sure to meet a number of her own sex. In the former instance, she can afford to dress in a style that strongly commends itself to the male taste, and she is quite sure to make her appearance in a costume bewitchingly simple. In the latter instance she would not, for all the men in the world, ignore the consideration of how the other women are likely to be dressed, and, accordingly, she bursts upon the view of both dazzlingly splendid. "Tell her she shines me down," says Guinevere, whom once more we quote, when she bids Lancelot give Elaine the diamonds, before, in a fit of jealous temper, she exclaims,

"Now, by the mother of our Lord Himself,
Or hers, or mine, now mine to work my will,
She shall not have them!"

and flings them into the river. It is quite certain that the diamonds had been fought for to please the womenkind, and that neither Lancelot, nor any other

knight of the Table Round, would love Elaine or anybody else, either more or less, for the wearing of them. But—"Tell her she shines me down." There it is. It is a woman's speech, not a man's. Women want diamonds in order to shine each other down, and they dress for precisely the same purpose. As a rule, they can have neither dress nor diamonds unless men lavish these things upon them; and that men have done so in abundance is in itself a demonstration that, in some way or other, they have already made themselves exceedingly pleasing to the donors. Here lies the secret. Women do not dress to please men, but in order to show each other that they have pleased them. Thus dress is, with women, not the means of victory, but the signs and proof of it.

Were we to assert that men dress to please women, we should be saying something very much nearer the mark than the averment that women dress to please men. And it is worth asserting—though, of course, in order to make it strictly true, it would require qualification—inasmuch as it will help to show us why what, *mutatis mutandis*, can be pretty freely predicated of one sex cannot be predicated at all of the other. Society is the business of a woman's life; it is man's pastime and relaxation. Accordingly the women, when in society, are mostly bent upon promoting what they conceive to be their

interests, whilst men are principally occupied in seeking what they conceive to be their pleasure. To be reciprocally pleasing is one of the objects in life of the members of both sexes; but it is the exclusive object of neither. Men are just as anxious to make themselves agreeable to women as women are to make themselves agreeable to men; but it is not in order to make themselves so that they study prices-current, worry their brains over pleadings, master the intricacies of the poor-law, or go through the dirty turmoil of a political election. There are other ways and other opportunities of gratifying the vain and amorous side of their nature; and, when the occasion arises, they are not neglectful of the external devices which they fancy will assist them in that particular quest. Accordingly, as we say, men who are desirous of rendering themselves grateful to women are conspicuously attentive to their dress. As we put it, they dress to please women. And though we must do woman the justice to observe that the arts of the popinjay are by no means a sure approach to her affections, the wisest of mankind, if bent upon attracting her, will not wholly disregard them. But she by no means thinks to please others by the methods which partially please her. The society where female attire is of consequence is her place of business, her mart, her public arena; and in it she has something to think of be-

sides moving the hearts of men. We do not say that the latter object is wholly foreign to her thoughts; but, as far as dress is concerned, it is. Should she steal five or ten minutes from the general business of the evening, and dedicate them to that special point, where does she spend them? Surely in some corner, alcove, conservatory, balcony—garden, maybe—where the splendour of her attire can no longer be duly seen. She knows that, for the subduing of man, a momentary glance, a transitory tone, an uncertain pressure of the hand, are worth all the dresses in the world. But, in order to conquer women, to put her heel upon the neck of her own sex, she must “shine them down.” Her husband or father may begrudge the expense, her lover may question her taste, and her brothers may tell her that she has made herself a perfect fright. But, so long as she feels sure that women do not think she has done anything of the kind, she does not care a pin for fraternal criticism; and she is confident that she possesses the peculiar arts which will compel father, lover, or husband, as the case may be, to allow her to do precisely the same to-morrow evening, or, if possible, to do ever so much more in the same direction. The error lies in overlooking the material fact that women, to say the very least, are just as ambitious as men, the only difference being that as the field of their ambition is not the same, neither

are their arms; and as, in the pursuit of this common passion, man contends with man and not with woman, so woman contends with woman and not with man. It is what his fellow-men think of his speech, his book, his picture, his influence on 'Change, his military capacity, and not what women think of it, that is an ambitious man's main consideration. Similarly it is what her fellow-women think of her skirt, her bonnet, her parure of pearls, her necklace, her headgear, and not what men think of it, that is an ambitious woman's consideration as she moves among her splendid rivals. In reality she values and rates men's opinion upon dress about as highly as they do hers upon political economy, the prospects of the Budget, or the Lord Chancellor's last argument. In plain words, she thinks rather meanly of it, or, at any rate, regards it as foreign to the purpose. Long after she pretends or even cares to captivate men, for herself at least, she is still all solicitude about her attire. In fact, it rather waxes than wanes with age, thus affording us a fresh presumption of its being in her the analogue to that ambition in man which also grows and deepens with the growing years. She may no longer have youth; she may no longer have beauty; but, so long as she can dress as handsomely, and in as costly a fashion as other women, she gives them manifest proofs that she still retains power, and the masculine affection,

which, nine times out of ten, originally gave it to her. Her husband enables her to dress fashionably, not that she may please him, but that he may please her; and this is precisely what he has done all along, from the very first day of his marrying her. The few women who do read the *Spectator* must have laughed when they read that they dress to please men; but it is a laugh in which men who know anything about women may heartily join.





SISTERS-IN-LAW.

A GENUINELY ardent lover cannot be expected to inquire too closely into the qualities of the various, and oftentimes innumerable, persons whom, indirectly, he is giving himself such infinite pains to make his own relations. In the first place, he is too busy; and in the second, he is a little biassed. His real eyes are fixed on one object, and one only; and he must, therefore, take her family satellites on trust. Moreover, the prepossession he has for her personally is more or less extended to all her belongings. At any rate, we shall not be putting the case too strongly if we say that the violent prejudice he has for her assumes the form of at least mild toleration for them. Thackeray has alluded to the situation, but a trifle more extravagantly than is usual with him. He pictures an enamoured swain as petting a domestic terrier that snaps at his calves, bringing sweetmeats for little brother Bobby that spills the coffee over his favourite shirt-front, and embracing

the family footman instead of tipping him. This, we say, is perhaps an exaggeration. Still, there is in it the element of truth. He is to the faults of the entire household more than blind; and it is certainly not till after marriage that he perhaps discovers his wife's father to be an old bore, his wife's mother to be an officious gossip, and his wife's brothers to be fast, stupid, and offensively familiar.

But there are certain members of his wife's family whom, unless he is a peculiarly unfortunate individual, he is pretty sure to find a most agreeable addition to his acquaintance, both before marriage and after it. We refer to his wife's sisters. We might be accused of an amusing solecism if we were to dwell upon the mingled solace and use they are to him during his courtship, for it is clear that, during that period of not altogether unalloyed bliss or smooth sailing, they are not yet his sisters-in-law; and it is when they have definitively assumed that relation to him that we wish to examine their qualities. They must be remarkably deficient in female fascinations, or he must be a churl indeed, if they are not welcome to stay at his house when, as yet, hardly anybody else is. There are certain little scenes, characteristic of newly-married life, which, perhaps, more than any other in a man's career, would cause him, if classically inclined, to repeat the sensitive Horatian words: "*Odi profanum vulgus*

et arceo:" and, in the thus uncomplimented crowd, he would certainly include his mother-in-law, and the other affectionate creatures that usually follow in her train. But a really nice sister-in-law may be admitted to the early matrimonial mysteries without any hesitation. She neither interferes in the inevitable *amantium iræ*, nor is she in the smallest degree shocked by those gushing little passages of honeymoon existence which constitute the *redintegratio amoris*. She has the maidenly delicacy to ignore both those little incidents. She is blind and deaf to the inadvertent petulances which are nothing more than the attempts of two young people, but shortly acquainted, to get to understand each other; and she has not a blush or a rebuke for those demonstrative reciprocal attentions with which all such unimportant bickerings are brought to a charming close. No doubt she thinks that when she is married, she and her husband, whoever he may turn out to be, will never quarrel like that at all; but she is too discreet to express such an opinion. Her sister always had an infirm temper, she reflects to herself; and great as is the affection between the newly-coupled pair, it is, when compared with the perfect love that will exist between her and her future lord, as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine. All such meditations, however, it is but natural that she should keep strictly to herself; and when ques-

tioned after her visit as to how her new brother and his wife get on together, she may be trusted to swear with consummate loyalty that they are the two happiest people she ever saw. As for him, he is the dearest fellow in the world; and she lets her own brothers plainly see that if they did but resemble him a little more in certain particulars, they would stand more highly in her good graces. For he pets her incessantly. When his arm is not round the waist of his young wife, it is round hers; and though he may ever and anon find fault with the former, he never has a word of blame for the latter. He has no interest in training her to his tastes, and accordingly he never checks her growth or chides her disposition. She amuses him, and he is satisfied. Moreover she is a sort of second attendant on him. If his wife gives him his cigar, it is she that brings him a light; and if one wheels him up the arm-chair, does not the other fetch him a foot-stool? In fact, she does but second her married sister's efforts to make him feel what that superior animal, man, is so fond of feeling himself to be—a domestic great mogul.

But the young lady, if she makes herself so exceedingly agreeable, receives considerable compensation for doing so. We have already referred to the amount of fraternal fondling and humouring she comes in for; and nobody acquainted with feminine

tastes will doubt that she prizes these little perquisites of her position very highly. They are, however, the very smallest of her rewards. Her admiration for the new *ménage* is, as we have seen, outspoken; and she gives the best proof of its sincerity by losing no opportunity of laying the foundations of another precisely similar. The most favourable opportunities for doing so she finds at the house of her brother-in-law; and these it is which more than repay her for all her attention to him. It is in the nature of things that he should have several male acquaintances of his own age; and the most select of these have been retained as the friends and guests of his married life. They come to have their cigar and chat with their old chum, to prove the merits of his first cook and the quality of his freshly laid-down cellar, to pay their reverence to his bride, and to do fealty generally to the new *régime*. But the young unmarried sister-in-law is not such a one as we have in our minds if she does not rapidly transfer their affection for all the above good things to herself. A brother-in-law is all very well, and is of course a decided improvement upon a brother. Indeed, he is perhaps an advance even upon a cousin. Nevertheless, he is, after all, not the real thing. The real thing, however, is here at last, and she is trotting him out and trying his paces in the shadier avenues and remoter paddock for which she has always expressed so decided a pre-

ference. She is sure that the two young married people want to be alone a little, and it is just possible that they do. It is quite certain that they display a prolonged indifference to her absence and her movements, which, under similar circumstances, would never be shown concerning her at home, or by her mother even here, if that worthy lady were near enough to spoil sport. But she is not, and it is not surprising if the grateful young visitor declares "the dearest fellow in the world" to be dearer than ever at the very moment that she is encouraging an interloper to supplant him in her affections. Now and then it will happen that the master of the house does not altogether favour the advances of the swain, and is unreasonable enough to consider himself entitled to have and give an opinion on the subject. If he does, his opinion does not go for much. The laws of hospitality are altogether ignored by the young lady, who does not scruple in the least to plot against the wishes of her brother-in-law under his own roof. She turns his castle into a mine against him; and she springs it whenever she thinks the occasion propitious. Should he be stupid enough to accept this as a proof of hostility, and to protract the combat after he has been hopelessly beaten, she will simply strike her tents, transfer her lines to pleasanter places, and ever afterwards declare that the dearest fellow in the world behaved exceedingly badly.

It is pleasant to think that such a rupture very rarely occurs. Even if, with the unproverbial but nevertheless common jealousy of a man, he begins by taking a dislike to the individual, his wife generally contrives to convert him before very long to sounder and more generous views. She reminds him of the difficulties which certain objectionable people threw in the way of their own union, asks him to bear in mind their own intense felicity, and thus recalls him to a more just appreciation of the position. If speedily convinced, or if, perhaps, favourable from the very first to the plot which is being carried on upon his premises, he is not unoften made the confidant of the trembling maiden's romance. She is not afraid to tell him all about it; for not only has he himself been recently in love, but during his courtship his present wife used to confide to her by what tender artifices he made known his devotion. She thus knows him to be human, and does not scruple to acquaint him how very human she also has suddenly become. Thus, in this world, every wise step promotes another. She will get married because he got married; and then there will be fresh sisters-in-law, and fresh love-making, and fresh marriages, and so on *ad infinitum*, under the sway of that beneficent blind deity, who, nevertheless, sees his way so exceedingly well, and, as the old song truly says, makes the world go round.



ONLY DAUGHTERS.

TO be the destined recipient of all the affection and all the money of a couple of fond and well-to-do parents would seem, theoretically, at least, to be about the most enviable lot that could possibly fall to an individual. Such is the position of an only daughter in the comfortable spheres of society when, to take the case to which we wish to turn our attention, she is an only child as well. The world is considered, by two people in it, at least, if not by three, to be expressly and entirely made for her. Usually, the number of those who regard her as the very centre of the universe and the end of all earthly movements, is considerably larger. It is not often that a young person has not one or two uncles and aunts who are childless, and uncles and aunts so circumstanced invariably regard such an only daughter as we are considering as, in a sense, their own. They have other nephews and nieces, no doubt, but none of them are so important as this one. This one, as

being already made the most of at home, is, with a proper sense of proportion, made the most of by them likewise, and being certain to inherit the whole of her parents' wealth, she is, in due conformity with scriptural precept, welcome to the largest share of theirs. Even should she not ultimately get it all, a considerable slice of it is, in their lifetime, bestowed upon her by anticipation. It is impossible not to give much to her to whom so much has already been given, and, as presents must be measured by the ideas rather than by the wants of a recipient, it is absolutely necessary to make her such as will bear comparison with those she is accustomed to receive. Other nephews and nieces there may be by the dozen, but the very mention of that formidable numeral is quite enough to determine the nature and quality of the gifts that can possibly have been bestowed upon them, and, therefore, to solve the problem of what to bestow. These last unfortunates, and even their very parents, not uncommonly swell the ranks of the gift-bearers. Admirably illustrating the averment that from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath, they are frequently compelled to spend a part of the little they have in a suitable mark of affection for their pet cousin. Of course this is done for policy's sake, but it will rarely be found that the return is at all commensurate with the speculation. It is so exceedingly natural for a

young lady to be loved by everybody else, who is loved by everybody already, that this expensive homage seldom makes the fructifying impression that is expected from it. The idea that people make presents and shower attention in order to obtain richer presents and still more prodigal attention in return is a suspicion too coarse to enter the head of an unsophisticated young girl; and as for her less simple parents, they are both of them too completely persuaded of her importance for the thought ever to occur to them that she does not repay any homage she may receive ten times over, by her mere affability in accepting it. So she grows up *stellas inter luna minores*. The cousin among cousins. In fact, she overrides the general English prejudice in such matters for the male sex, and positively comes to be regarded as the head of the family.

This is certainly a very exalted situation for anyone to occupy by sheer accident. It is accompanied, nevertheless, by a few drawbacks. An only daughter, who is also an only child, will generally be found, by the time she is seventeen or eighteen, to be pronounced exceedingly delicate. Nine times out of ten she really is so; but a careful examination of her interesting biography would show that she had been deliberately made so by her leading adorers. So precious a thing was naturally handed over in

good time to one of those felicitous ruiners of the strongest constitutions, conventionally known as family doctors. It would have been at his peril had he said, from the very first, that nothing was the matter with her, that she had the lungs of a horse and the nerves of an elephant. He would have been summarily dismissed as being both heartless and incompetent. In all probability he easily, and by no means dishonestly, fell into the faith respecting her which he found established. Even medical men are human; some people allege that they are peculiarly so. Be this as it may, it is not surprising that he should regard as exceptionally precious a baby that everybody about him declared to be treated as such; and from regarding a thing as exceptionally precious to regarding it as exceptionally fragile, is not only a short, but an inevitable step. The general law of mental association is too rigorous to be evaded. The family doctor having been thus early converted to sound views of the only daughter's constitution, her parents can appeal to their convert to corroborate and justify their own opinion. Who, then, shall question such authoritative testimony? Once acknowledged to be exceedingly fragile, she is treated as becomes her condition. Her treatment, in fact, resembles that of rare and delicate china. Other articles of furniture are used, sat upon, moved about, broken, mended, and thought to

be none the worse for their rough experience. But china usually under or behind a glass protection is rarely handled, and then only for the purpose of being aired and dusted. It may be said with equal truth of this fragile thing, the only daughter, that she is aired and dusted, and that is all. She sees comparatively little even of her cousins, save on the gift-bringing occasions we have referred to, and still less of other young people of her own age, since some one of them is always sure to have the measles, the scarlatina, the chicken-pox, and—who knows?—she might catch these mortal diseases, and then! The thought is too terrible to be dwelt upon. She is never allowed to be out late at night, for her throat is most sensitive, and the cold air is little short of death to her. She is not allowed to ride, for horses have been known to run away; and, if they ran away with *her*, what *would* be done? She is not permitted to go out boating, lest she should be drowned. The atmosphere of theatres is most unwholesome, and the opera is nearly just as bad. She accordingly takes her amusements at morning concerts and at the Royal Academy, which accounts for the circumstance that the importance in the universe of things of this latter institution grows to a more abnormal size in her mind even than it does in that of most young ladies. In a word, her existence strongly resembles that of the pretty little piping shepherd,

or the still prettier little pouting shepherdess, in biscuit, under a glass shade, on the mantelpiece of the drawing-room.

At length the season arrives when this only daughter and only child, fragile though she still may be, must perforce be considered marriageable; and it might be supposed that she would now reap more than compensation for the little pleasures which her extreme value had caused her natural guardians hitherto to deny her. Such, on an impartial investigation, will not be found to be the case. She is known to be an heiress, and has now become as precious in one sense as she formerly was in another. Suitors therefore ought to be plentiful, and they probably are. But they are not necessarily of the sort which a dispassionate outsider would wish for an ingenuous maiden, and she is perhaps scarcely qualified by her antecedents to appreciate either the best or the worst of them. Proud men do not usually make love to heiresses, and proud men are at least generally true men. Neither do ordinary independent men care to go through all the suit and service which, nine times out of ten in such cases, has to be paid to the parents. These last think nobody good enough for her; nobody sufficiently rich, sufficiently distinguished, sufficiently attentive, sufficiently pious. A good deal of hypocrisy must be submitted to, as a rule, by a man who wants to win an only child.

If he has fallen madly in love with her, perhaps he will bring himself to go through it, for love is desperately unprincipled ; and its aberrations and temptations in this respect are so well recognised that they have been condoned by anticipation in the well-known ethical dictum as to anything being fair in its conduct. Fair it may be, but it must be uncommonly unpleasant to a sensitive disposition. For the girl does not help, as other girls would help. She has been brought up in such a narrow and artificial fashion that a reference to papa, mamma, or the family doctor, seems the instinctive resource of her mind. This is not agreeable to an impassioned lover. He finds his means, his habits, his health, his church-going propensities, narrowly inquired into, whilst the young lady sits neutral, awaiting the verdict of these promiscuous umpires. And if the decision be in his favour—well, perhaps such a man will make her the best husband, and will best endure her nerves, her narrow undeveloped nature, her exorbitant need of attention, and her implicit reliance on—his mother-in-law. Not unoften the man that woos her, though he may satisfy her family, is scarcely in love with her at all, but regards her fortune as more attractive than her face. Sometimes she herself is as whimsical and difficult to please as her parents, or wants to marry some bold penniless good-for-nothing who has carried her heart by

assault and with an impudent rush. But just as she had not the sense to keep him at a proper distance, so she has not the pluck to stand by him when he is near. In fact, she is entirely without initiative. She never helps a man to make love to her, and accordingly she never marries the man, if there be one, who really wants her, or whom she really wants. Her cousins, not so blest as she, after roughing it in an infinity of ways, have all sorts of adventures, love-adventures among the number, and marry before her. Perhaps she never marries at all. But, even if she does, she has had no genuine childhood, no grand romance, but an existence of drugs, presents, thick shawls, and a proposal half made to her by her mamma, the whole crowned with a splendid wedding and more handsome presents. Happier the girl who has been a hoyden in her time, who has romped with her brothers, taken counsel with her sisters, had two or three admirable flirtations, whose face is her fortune, and who has accepted some presuming youth without asking her mamma. Happier, too, that youth than the complaisant individual who marries the wealth of purse and poverty of nature of one who is "all the daughters of her father's house, and all the brothers too." She is not likely to be a Viola.



LARGE FAMILIES.

IT is occasionally remarked, and with considerable truth, that a good deal of commiseration is thrown away in this world. People are oftentimes nothing like so miserable as some folks, prodigal of pity if of nothing else, would like to think them. The “poor fellow” of familiar conversation is frequently an exceedingly contented individual; and the “poor dear thing” of friendly female depreciation would not uncommonly be found, if pursued into the parlour of private life, to be as blithe as a bee and as happy as a queen. We are, perhaps inevitably, far too prone to ascribe our own humour to other people’s condition, and to conclude that circumstances must infallibly make them miserable which we imagine would make us so. No doubt it is a fortunate dispensation which thus enables us to console ourselves for our own real misfortunes by the reflection that we are free from those which we suppose to be overwhelming our neighbours; but this agreeable balm

is attainable, we suspect, only by a wholesale sacrifice of accuracy and of observation. The non-speculative mind will, perhaps, think that the sacrifice is one well worth making. If ignorance of other people's bliss at all ministers to our own, it assuredly affords a cardinal instance of the truth that it may be monstrous folly to be wise.

The commiseration of which we speak is, we believe, seldom more gratuitous and more utterly thrown away than upon what are called large families. There can be no doubt that they are, as far as the forms of language go, a most popular object of compassion; and the pity is very evenly distributed among father, mother, and offspring. The days have long gone by when to be the fruitful mother of children was the happiest ambition to which, in public estimation, a woman could aspire, and certainly there is no longer any necessary connection between the fact of a family increasing and multiplying, and that of its possessing the land. Such an association of ideas seems to have gone out with tents; suburban villas harmonising but indifferently with patriarchal habits. If it is still considered rather undignified to have no children at all, it is looked upon as supremely ridiculous to have a great many. The bare mention of "a full quiver" is enough to upset the gravity of an entire company; being of that particular species of wit which George

Eliot speaks of as well-known to produce laughter. It is considered perfectly legitimate, even by the most straitlaced wits, to quote Scripture in connection with the subject, with an exclusively humorous intention; and when, in answer to the inquiry how many youngsters a married couple have, it is piously intimated that verily the Lord hath been bountiful, the unhappy pair are at once dismissed from conversation with a jocular interjection or a patronising smile. But ridicule is only another form, employed in our lighter moments, of the feeling of pity to which we have adverted; and whichever way we examine the matter, we shall end by finding that large families are an object of universal and profound commiseration.

We feel convinced, nevertheless, that it could well be spared. We are vastly mistaken if a much greater amount of happiness is not found in large families than in small ones. "The more the merrier," is an aphorism far more justly applicable to domestic than to social life. Theoretically, one would scarcely expect that a number of entire or comparative strangers would be made more friendly or genial, simply by being numerically multiplied; and experience fully corroborates this negative expectation. We all know, to our cost, how a big dinner means, not only a bad dinner, but a dull dinner; and in comparing one's reminiscences of the

amount of pleasure derived respectively from a crowded ball in London and a little dance got up on the spur of the moment in a country-house, one would not hesitate for a moment to award the palm to the latter. But society and the family are two very different things, and stand upon quite distinct footings. It is not often that families are so outrageously large that their number violates the conditions of an agreeable dinner-party, or that they must positively be sent to supper in consecutive batches. We are not considering such extreme cases as that of the Contessa Frescobaldi, whose full-length portrait may be seen, both in the family palace of that name in Florence, and in the Villa of San Donato, belonging to Prince Demidoff, about a couple of miles out of the Beautiful City. An inscription at the foot of the frame gravely—though usually with the result of upsetting gravity—informs people that this worthy lady, according to Napoleon's definition, the greatest woman, we should think, that ever existed, had *cinquanta-due figliuoli*, no less than fifty-two children. This is an exceptional case, with which we refuse to have anything to do, being happy to think that another such great woman as that can be produced again upon earth, like Shakespeare, only after the lapse of æons. An Irish lady, whose name is well-known—one member of the family which she did so much to multiply having recently been the

victim of a brutal outrage—bade fair to rival the Florentine countess; but she ended by scoring only thirty-two, as against the fifty-two of her predecessor. But even her case is abnormal; and we will concede that even a Celtic heart might prove incapable of feeling real fraternal affection for his fifteenth brother or his sixteenth sister. *Est modus in rebus*; there is reason in the hatching no less than in the roasting of eggs. The only possible use to which we can conceive such a number of children as that being put, would be to make them take the place of the beads threaded on wire by means of which the youthful mind is sometimes indoctrinated in the awful mysteries of simple arithmetic, and thus subserve the purpose of completing each other's education. The rules of subtraction and division might thus be economically and conveniently inculcated in the bosom of the family; multiplication, it will probably be thought, having been sufficiently illustrated already.

The consideration of these *lusus naturæ* has led us away for a moment from the real topic in hand, and we can only revert to our assertion, that what is commonly understood by a large family, far from being a misfortune, is a blessing to everybody concerned, society included. The mother will perhaps be objected to as scarcely a fair witness; and did our case rest wholly upon maternal testimony, we should hesitate to come into court with it. Nevertheless, let

it stand for what it is worth. Prejudiced as she may be, even a mother's feelings cannot be wholly overlooked. What they are nearly everybody knows. Saint Evremond says that the last sighs of a woman are for her beauty. It may be so; but her penultimate ones are unquestionably for her babies. Babies are to her the golden sands in the hour-glass; and she may laugh at time as long as a succession of inarticulate cries ceases not to assure her that to her still belongs the living present. But other considerations, more sentimental than selfish, likewise enter into her joy; and innocent as she may be of Virgil, she is keenly alive to her share of the tender rapture expressed in that untranslatably lovely line of his—

"Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem."

And even though—no matter how many her successive delights may have been—these simplest but deepest joys must cease, the maternal heart is happily foolish enough to be able to reap pleasurable excitement from considering the breadth of pinafores, or deciding on the thickness of boots. For all of which things, the cynical critic will observe, the husband must pay. He must and does. If there be any difficulty in the matter, whose wings is it that usually get clipped? The mother's, from whom the carriage is taken, or to whom the trip to the sea-side is denied; and if she is satisfied, as we have seen she

is, with the bargain, it is nobody's business to complain. As for the children themselves, they hail each new-comer with delight, and their instincts do not in this instance lead them astray. The time comes when every fresh helpless mite added to the family becomes a stalwart playfellow. A large family is a host in itself. Its members are never dependent for amusements upon strangers. They are always numerous enough to be able to organise their own games. Winter or summer, it is the same. What can be more miserable than for two lads to have to play cricket without a long-stop, or to have to press some shrinking little sister, with her extended apron, into the service? She has to be coaxed, bribed, or bullied into the operation; and the cruel sport generally ends by a flood of tears on the part of the tiny female mercenary. Let there be but plenty of boys, and plenty of girls, and there can never be any lack of fun—masculine fun and feminine fun—astir. They quarrel, it will be said. Of course they do; and herein lies another tremendous advantage of a large family as against a small one. Their interests are so many, and from moment to moment so various, that they are everlastingly clashing. What better preparation could there be for life? They thrash and are thrashed, snub and are snubbed, contradict and are contradicted, till it gets thoroughly well impressed on the mind of each one early on in

existence, that he is not the only individual in the world before whom everything must bow and give way. The domestic circle becomes thus a miniature public school, in which all its advantages are acquired. The love of adventure gets cultivated, since large families are always much more adventurous than small ones; personal conceit and self-love are pitilessly extirpated; excessive sensibility is counteracted, and both boys and girls are easily and imperceptibly prepared to be good and sane citizens. As a conclusive illustration of what we mean, we will say that a man is a fool who marries into a small family if he can marry into a large one. In the one case he gets a colt ready broken; in the other he runs a great risk of getting something that he himself will never be able to train to conjugal paces. "Poor woman!" exclaims the superficial observer, when he sees a mother with five or six unmarried daughters. Had he as much good sense as self-sufficiency, he would propose to one of them forthwith. He is looking for an only child with a lot of money. Heaven help him if he gets her! If her impracticable temper does not astonish him, the study of human nature is a barren pursuit. It is pleasant, moreover, to know that, as a fact, the girls of large families do get married. One goes, and all the rest follow. They help each other—as why should they not?—to husbands, just as in earlier life, they helped to do

each other's hair and fasten each other's dresses, and lent each other their modest jewellery. Husband number one has always one or two of his sisters-in-law staying with him; and next to his young wife, they are the most agreeable objects his eyes can rest upon. He feels almost as vindictively towards his friends who come and marry them as he will feel, later on in life, when his own girls desert him under a like irresistible temptation. Then there are two households for the remaining sisters to disport their charms in. Union is force: but in order to have union we must first have units; and it is only in such extreme instances as that of the Frescobaldi that they become too many and unmanageable for the purpose. The family is the pivot of all true civilisation; and the larger the family, within natural limits, the sounder the pivot. The hard practical conditions of the nineteenth century may seem to militate against the doctrine; but as in the long-run the aim of humanity is not to be rich but to be happy, large families will again some day be publicly acknowledged to be, what we shrewdly opine they really are at this moment, in spite of all contemporaneous drawbacks—a blessing, and not a curse.



HOUSE-HUNTING.

AMONG the innumerable evils which flesh is heir to must be prominently set down that of house-hunting. None save hardened bachelors, and not always even they, can hope to pass through this valley of tears without having to submit to it at least once in their lives; and hardened bachelors are so abnormal and unnatural a class as to be quite beneath the notice of the conscientious moralist. It is not necessary to concern ourselves with these monstrous exceptions—mere excrescences on the fair face of human nature. Restricting ourselves wholly to the consideration of those sound instances which obey the one great rule of life,—which, as everybody is aware, runs thus: “All people who are born into this world are born to get married,”—we incur no risk of being contradicted when we assert, that the very first thing the manly Briton has to do when, after anxious efforts, he has succeeded in winning the heart of the young lady of his choice, is to set to work and discover for

her a suitable home. The question, "Can you keep a wife, sir?" implies, as an understood thing, "Can you afford to set up house for her?" We pity the poor swain who has to face an outraged sire without being able to give a satisfactory reply to this substantial inquiry. If he can content the maiden's parents upon this head, he will probably be at length forgiven by them for his malicious attempts to rob them of their daughter.

Then comes the house-hunting. It is not on such an occasion, however, that his labours in that direction evoke our profoundest commiseration. It must not be forgotten that the undertaking is accompanied, in this instance, with very considerable compensations. In the first place, it affords an excuse for several excursions with his betrothed, and gives him those opportunities of having her all to himself which he has so long desired, and hitherto so rarely found. Naturally enough, indulgence in the joy of this novel pleasure is, at first, uppermost in his thoughts, to the serious detriment of the practical design for the execution of which it has been parentally permitted. But as the period of courtship grows shorter and shorter,—as the presents for the young lady come tumbling in, and interviews with mysterious bandbox-laden young women are more and more frequent—in a word, as the appointed day for putting an end to these pretty preliminaries ap-

proaches,—all this trifling with the serious business of choosing a house has to cease, and the feeling that they “must find one somewhere” becomes predominant in the minds of both. She, unsophisticated creature, despite her proper regrets at leaving the bosom of her family, is so excited at the idea of having a house of her own, that she is rashly inclined to think almost every one she sees the very thing of which they are in search. Convenience of situation, rent, taxes, drainage, are as yet unknown terms to her; and if she does not aggravate the perplexities of the poor wight with any objections or criticisms of her own, she not unfrequently causes him no little internal annoyance by her cheerfully-ignorant admiration of what he cannot afford to take, though he cannot bring himself to tell her his reason for rejecting it. Such blunt confessions are reserved for a later period of existence. Meanwhile, not having the slightest glimpse of his real motive, she cannot help letting him see that she thinks him rather whimsical and unreasonable. Probably, in his desperation, he ends by taking it. He will have plenty of leisure for repentance.

But we cannot regard the operation of house-hunting, when performed by a pair of lovers, as at all that overwhelmingly weary thing, that affliction of the flesh, which it undeniably is when experienced by people who are already married and settled in

life, and have children, servants, furniture, and every conceivable encumbrance to move along with them, when they shall have made up their minds where they shall move to. It is generally the wife of one's bosom that suggests what Mr. Micawber—we did not appreciate the phrase in our younger days, but we thoroughly understand it now—so justly called “emigration.” With that tact which is proverbially the chief endowment of her sex, she contrives to prepare her husband by gentle but continuous manoeuvres for the fate which is in store for him. She has learnt by this time that he is only a man, and she treats him accordingly. She has made up her mind long before she declares it. She has for some months past discovered that the abode which she found perfectly charming when she was first married is not even fit to live in; but with that saint-like patience which is the secret of her strength, she puts up with the intolerable premises till such time as she considers it discreet overtly and uncompromisingly to denounce them. Meanwhile, she is not altogether idle. If a window-pane is cracked, and nobody confesses to having done it, she gives it as her opinion that the house is “settling,” and that such is the cause of the mysterious occurrence. If the children are laid up with cold in the middle of winter, she avers that there is such a draught in the nursery that she wonders they are not in influenza all the year

round. Whenever her lord is incautious enough to complain of a joint being done amiss, or a sweet being spoilt, she declares her surprise at the cook being able to serve up a dinner of any sort in such a kitchen; and if some of the domestics take it into their heads to give notice, she is quite sure that no servant ever will stay in a house provided with such wretched accommodation. By such degrees is the way gently sloped for the announcement that they must move into another house. In vain does the husband try the blandishments of a little affectionate Latin, and, translating *ubi uxor ibi domus* for her benefit, assures her that wherever she is he finds a thoroughly comfortable home, and begs her to think both of the bother and the expense. The replies to such miserable arguments as these are easy enough. The Latin adage, she is quite sure, is just about as sensible as most Latin would be if it were only put into plain English. Would he be content to live with her in a tumble-down hut or under a haystack? Besides, would she not be quite as much in the new house as in the nasty old one? As for the bother about money, if he only knew the bother she had in keeping things together and decent where they were! No doubt there would be some little expense incurred in the change; but it would prove a mere trifle compared to the daily, hourly, expense of patching up a place that was always falling to pieces. Women in-

variably prevail in such controversies. Who can doubt, remembering a scriptural adage, that it is because they have truth entirely on their side?

Once more, then, has house-hunting become the pressing question of the hour. Agents are written to for their lists, which contain such an array of admirable residences, that at first sight it would appear as though the selection of a house was the simplest thing in the world, or that if any difficulty attended the operation, it consisted rather in the abundance than paucity of choice. The *Times* is daily appealed to, and daily tells the same flattering tale. Away hies Paterfamilias, this time all alone, to examine and report. He can now plead that it would be throwing money away for them both to go on the preliminary journey; and his wife, for her part, has no anxiety to accompany him until he has found what will suit them. To him the duty of rejection, to her that of definitive acceptance. She thinks she can trust him to say what will not do, but she is quite sure she cannot trust him to say what will. It turns out, however, that he comes back, day after day, after careering over half a county, only to announce that he has seen nothing in the smallest degree likely, and to declare, in the bitterness of a disappointed spirit, that all men are liars. The "charmingly rural retreats" of the advertisements were semi-detached villas, a couple of minutes

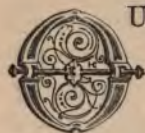
from a vile station. The "park-like residence" was an altered farm-house with a damp paddock in front of it. The "substantial abode" was of lath and plaster. He returns so invariably with the same story, that she almost begins to suspect he is trying hard to make them remain where they are. He offers to take her to any single one, the advertised description of which has captivated her imagination. She goes, sees, and for once is conquered. She pronounces it horrible. Meanwhile, the expense incurred by all these journeys to the four points of the compass is becoming fabulous. Having begun, however, they must go on. At length he finds something which he half thinks may satisfy her. He is at once rigorously questioned; but he is as stupid as men always are, and can give no intelligible account of what he has seen. Can he make a sketch of it? No; not if he were to be shot for his incapacity. She must go with him and see it for herself. But she wants to know all about it beforehand. He makes one desperate effort to enlighten her, but is just as incomprehensible as ever. They then visit it in concert. Of course, it will not do at all. But, if only for the sake of making an end, let us suppose that it will. And the rent? He does not yet know. It turns out to be half as much again as he intended to give. Three removals as bad as one fire, do they say? Do not believe it. Better

fifty fires than this awful visitation, even for once. At the bare mention of it, ring for a box of lucifers, and set fire to all you possess. Insist upon the subject never again being mooted, or have immediate recourse to some such modified form of *suttee* as the above. It has been said that many men have never written a book at all, but that few, if any, have written but one. Instead of men and books, think of women and removals, and sapiently apply the apothegm against all provocations, even to commence house-hunting. Every honest man must do it once, just as he must once get married. But somewhat as Lord Chesterfield asked at the end of his first day's hunting, we too inquire, "Do sane men ever do this sort of thing twice?"





“TRUE COLLEGES” FOR WOMEN.



UR age has been so prolific of absurdities, that we cannot well be expected to feel any very great surprise at the incubation of one foolish project more ; we therefore receive with a feeling of quiet, if somewhat contemptuous, resignation, an enthusiastic appeal to us to subscribe for the foundation of “A True College for Women.” It is to be in the country, in a healthy situation, “somewhere between Cambridge and London,” and the young ladies are to remain there during the whole of the Academical year. The true collegiate idea, we are told, will be carried out, in regard to a separate room being provided for each student ; and local residence is to be an absolute condition. In fact, the existing Universities are to afford the models for this new institution—or rather institutions—since it is impossible to suppose that the ambitious promoters of the scheme will be content with only one “true College.” It would be unreasonable to expect that the idea should attain its full

development all at once. Rome was not built in a day; and though our modern constructive geniuses are very superior in celerity of action to the founders of the Eternal City, some little time must be given them for maturing their conceptions. The members of the Council, whose names we mercifully withhold, are individuals of so peculiarly and exceptionally lofty a stamp, that they would feel grossly insulted by its being supposed that they are *in fœce Romuli*. Being people essentially of ideas, they are quite above that common but inferior human condition. Nevertheless, even ideas do not always present themselves as complete from their birth as Minerva, and we are therefore left to our own surmises as to what, in several particulars, will be the ultimate arrangements and features of the establishments they forecast. Having grasped the principle, however, and laid firmly hold of the cardinal tenet that they are to be “true Colleges,” like those of Oxford and Cambridge, we can have but little difficulty in conceiving their final and full-blown characteristics. A contemplation of the prospect is eminently agreeable. Wine-parties in the students’ “separate rooms,” will of course be of nightly occurrence. Whether hunting shall be allowed or not may be a matter yet open to discussion, though we should imagine that it would be settled favourably to the legitimate collegiate aspirations of the spirited *alumnae*. But boat-

ing will be one of the feminine exercises, as a matter of course. Indeed, in that respect, these “true Colleges”—for, as we have said, though the promoters begin with one, they will very soon find it necessary to establish at least a couple—are called into existence in the very nick of time. Despite the reversal of a hasty resolve on the part of Cambridge not to challenge Oxford again, it is manifest that the great University Race is in considerable jeopardy. Its entire discontinuance would be a great blow to the public, who have come to regard the annual contention at Putney as a national festivity, to whose recurrence prescription has given them a right. The public may now be more than consoled. The “true Colleges for Women” will be sure to challenge each other to a yearly struggle on the Thames; rivalry, and an ignorance of when they are beaten, being notable feminine characteristics. The right of the Derby Day to be considered, *par excellence*, the “Olympic Games” of the metropolis, has long been threatened and of late seriously called in question by the University Boat Race; but when once the picked crews are selected from the first and freshest young ladies in the land, attired in costume suited to the exigencies of the occasion, we think there can be little doubt that Epsom Downs will have definitively to bow in general attractiveness to Putney Bridge. An annual croquet-match at Lord’s—also for the gratification of

respectful Londoners—will, we need scarcely say, fitly crown the labours of the studious year; public academical honours being thus happily blended with collegiate ones. Upon other phenomena of a female University career we need scarcely dwell, as they are so obvious. Active proctors and bulldogs will be indispensable. Fellowships there must necessarily be. We can only hope that they will be sufficiently numerous to be bestowed on nearly all the fair students alike; and that the good old rule of not allowing Fellows to marry will on no account be relaxed.

It is difficult to treat with gravity this preposterous proposal of a University career for the potential wives of Englishmen, without being betrayed into an indignation such as, nowadays, is never effective, and is not infrequently ridiculous. Still it must on no account be supposed, because we have approached the subject in a tone of levity, that we do not consider it to be of the most serious importance. Manhood suffrage, triumph of Trades Unionism, and Secularism rampant, would be almost minor evils, compared with a system, if extensively adopted, calculated to unfit women for the performance of the very duties, and usefulness in the very sphere, to which none but extravagant doctrinaires would dream of denying that women, and women only, are intended and adapted. We have no sympathy with the doctrine which Mr. Lowe, in a fit of splenetic

capriciousness, seems to have adopted—that education ought to be exclusively dedicated to fitting individuals for the particular office in life they may have to fill. But we do maintain that it should never unfit them for it; and if it can be shown, in any instance, that it is producing such a result, it ought at once to be abandoned. Education is not, as many allege, only a means; or as a few others maintain, an end in itself. It is both one and the other. To be highly and variously cultured would be a good thing, even if it led to nothing else, always supposing that nothing else was required; nor could that training justly be condemned which duly prepared a person for success in some particular walk in which it was contemplated that his energies should be mainly exercised. But what could possibly be pleaded for an educational system which, contemplating certain practical ends, selected the means which made their attainment highly improbable, if not absolutely impossible? We yield to none in advocating the culture of the female intellect. We should wish to see women as accomplished, indeed, as erudite, as ever they could be persuaded to become, so long as they are not thereby rendered incapable of performing certain duties more imperative, and therefore more ennobling in their case, than all the erudition in the world. We do not say that the two are incompatible; though nature would have to be very lavish

if she were to unite them to perfection in one and the same individual. But there are more ways than one of becoming erudite, whilst there never was and never will be but one way of becoming a good wife and mother. Home, and home only, is the "true College" for girls. We have seen some shallow nonsense about these new-fangled institutions affording "emancipation from the gossip and effeminate friendships of forced boarding-school intimacies." We fully agree in the implied condemnation of boarding-schools. But we wholly fail to see what "emancipation" is offered against their fundamental evils by the "true Colleges." We are treading on delicate ground, and must needs pick our way somewhat daintily. Nevertheless, we need not shrink from saying that the congregating of young girls at a certain age, either in boarding-schools, true Colleges, or any other gregarious establishment, with whatever name misled and misleading people like to give it, is a downright forcing of minds which ought, for the moment, to be kept as dormant as possible. By minds we do not mean intellects; we mean what everybody who is acquainted with human nature will understand. It is on this account, and on this alone, that female boarding-schools are so unspeakably pernicious; and the "true Colleges," as necessarily affording still more liberty, and a still larger gregariousness, at an age when excessive liberty and gre-

garioussness are especially to be guarded against, far from being an improvement on boarding-schools, would exaggerate their mischiefs. We recommend those persons whose own ignorance allows them to have any doubts on the subject to read a little book recently published, called *Children of the State*, by Florence Hill, and see the opinion of the authoress, and of the numerous weighty testimonies she adduces, concerning the utter hopelessness of bringing up the female children of paupers morally, as long as they are trained together in schools, even schools removed from baneful workhouse influence. She strenuously advocates the boarding-out system, already extensively practised in Ireland, France, and Germany, under which female pauper children are admitted into the home of respectable cottagers, and brought up as members of the family. The sole and sufficient motive is, that they may be separated from each other, and enjoy the influence of a home. Now girls remain girls, even though, instead of being the children of paupers, they are the children of peeresses. There is a wonderful deal of human nature in men, says an American humorist; and we will add that there is some little in women, though a certain set of people do not seem to be aware of it. We do not need to be reminded that the congregating of boys in large schools is open to the same kind of objection; but fortunately the consequences,

if deleterious, are not fatal—as in girls they would be ; and the drawback is attended—as with girls it would not be—with far more than equivalent advantages. Contaminating influences do not disqualify a man from becoming a good husband and an excellent father. Could the same be said, without violating both truth and nature, of those who are intended to become wives and mothers ?

Quitting this branch of the subject, which, though the most difficult to handle, is by far the most important of all, we may briefly remark that, whatever can be taught a girl at a "true College," the personal expense of which is to be "80*l.* per annum," can be taught her at home, but that all the professors, male and female together, in the two hemispheres, cannot teach her what she will learn under the domestic roof and the maternal eye. By all means let the cultivation of her mind be there ever more and more attended to ; though we really cannot abstain from saying that the average girl is already quite sufficiently educated to be a companion for the average man. We shall be delighted to see the intellects of both raised simultaneously ; but we have no hesitation in declaring that, if the choice lay between absolute ignorance of the alphabet and absolute destruction of the influence of home training, we should choose the former alternative for women without doubt or scruple. Luckily, no such selection

is thrust upon us. Luckily, too, we have no problem to solve like that which is now being solved in France, by an angry quarrel in which the Bishop of Orleans and the Minister of Public Instruction are the most conspicuous combatants. There is no divorce of thought between men and women in England. The latter are not brought up in "narrowing nunnery walls," nor the former in Voltairian class-rooms. Both have their beliefs, and both have their doubts. The question with us is not an intellectual one at all, but a moral one; and it is in the interests of morality alone that we plead. We cannot express our wishes on the subject more completely than by quoting that couplet of Coventry Patmore's in which he wishes a woman to be

"So wise in all she ought to know,
So ignorant of all beside."

We very much doubt even if the wisdom of the first line would be attained in these "true Colleges;" but we are quite sure that they would not long protect the happy ignorance so delicately alluded to in the second.





THE GIRL OF THE FUTURE.

WHEN a Roman Catholic Bishop of world-wide distinction and unblemished orthodoxy loudly advocates intellectual culture for women, and urges them to devote two hours every day, and, if possible, three, to their mental improvement, it becomes plain that the days of beautiful, bewitching ignorance are doomed. Did Mgr. Dupanloup intimate, in the most distant manner, encouragement or even toleration of strong-minded females, we should be the very last to recommend, as we now most urgently recommend, a close perusal of his *Femmes Savantes et Femmes Studieuses*. But, whatever may be their other shortcomings or mistakes, Roman Catholic prelates, with their vast practical experience of human nature, and their dignified familiarity with the world, are not at all likely to commit the rash, coarse blunders of Radical philosophers. The Bishop of Orleans does not contemplate the metamorphosis of woman into what M. de Maistre

aptly called a bad and apish imitation of man; but, perceiving that considerable personal freedom, and, at the very least, a little reading of some sort, are both in the present and the future to be her inevitable portion, he is opportunely solicitous that her free will and her literary curiosity should pursue the safe and satisfying course of a serious channel. He makes no allusion to her entering into competition with man in the ruder occupations of life. His ambition is limited to the desire to improve woman's actual condition; he has no thought of altering it. He would have her, as wife and mother, still skilled and interested in the management of a household—still attentive, within measure, to her personal adornment, and still generously alive to the duty of making herself socially agreeable. She must never cease to be both *femme essentielle* and *femme agréable*. But, in addition, she must be *femme d'esprit*, not in a frivolous sense, but in the sense of one who can think seriously, study sustainedly, and converse rationally. Without being all these three things, she can never hope to be what, with them, she cannot fail to be, *femme distinguée*.

But we doubt even if this practical prelate, whose opinions we again importunately urge upon the attention of English readers, has got to the root of the matter in his book, though we are quite ready to believe that he has done so in his mind. Our diffi-

culty strikes very deep indeed ; and as it is not even alluded to in the *Femmes Savantes et Femmes Studieuses*, we must expound and endeavour to solve it for ourselves. In the last ten pages, which compose his concluding chapter, Mgr. Dupanloup, as might naturally have been expected from a writer who is at once a Frenchman and a Roman Catholic theologian, lays down *le Plan de la Vie*, in which the two or three hours already mentioned, that are to be jealously guarded against the world, the household, and even family intrusion, are once more eloquently insisted on. Without such a provision as this, which nothing should be permitted to infringe, life, he says, is but a haphazard affair—a mere accident and caprice. We believe that truer word was never spoken. But when is this practice, in the case of every individual woman, to commence? Is it after marriage? Is she suddenly to cease to be frivolous, and to be changed into a serious person at—say, in this country—twenty-three? Impossible, save by something approaching to a miracle. What a woman is at that age, she will more or less be for the remainder of her life. And what, usually, is she at that age? We think that no blame attaches to her for being what we will take permission to describe her. If she is not a being who considers that it is amusement of some sort—whether it be balls, flower-shows, water-parties, garden-fêtes, horses, carriages,

croquet, dresses, jewellery, pretty things, or all of these taken together—which constitutes the prospect and real substance of life, we are wholly mistaken as to the interior workings of her mind. We do not for one moment believe that the female nature is one whit more frivolous or more indolent than the male nature. Indeed, we suspect that it is not only not more indolent, but that it is more active. The average man, we are strongly disposed to think, is more ready to do nothing, and to be satisfied with doing nothing, than the average woman. She is more mercurial, more inquisitive—in a word, more restless than he is. She wants to do something with life, whereas a man is very often quite content to do absolutely nothing with it. But it is surely neither very surprising, nor, as far as individual culpability is involved, very reprehensible, if she inclines and wants to do with it what she finds most women of her own age and class doing with it. We are now speaking of girls; and what does a girl find other girls of, say, from eighteen to twenty-three, doing with life?—Participating in the management of a household?—Just so far attending to their personal appearance as is consistent with self-regard and a due regard for others, and no further?—Striving to be agreeable to everybody, quite independently of any profit that is to be reaped from the effort?—Abstracting themselves for two or three hours a day,

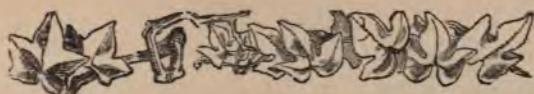
from everybody and everything, with calm and punctual resolution, in order to cultivate their own minds?—It would be affectation to pretend that this is what a girl, wishing to take example from her peers, would find in the way of a common pattern. On the contrary, she sees them quite ignorant—indeed, something more than ignorant, absolutely innocent—of domestic economy; lavishing upon the management and decoration of their persons so much time that the result, though they themselves may not know it, is nearly always mismanagement and often something far removed from the decorous; making themselves agreeable as the humour of the moment or the prospective use of doing so prompts them; and absenting themselves, if they do so at all, from the general circle for just so many hours as are required for the secluded carrying on of a correspondence with their female friends. In a word, she finds them honestly believing and acting up to the belief that life is not a serious matter at all, but an agreeable game, the early portion of which, after they have once donned long dresses, consists of those occupations which are popularly supposed to be the most likely to turn them, when the time comes, into married women; and the latter portion of which consists of the same occupations over again, with this immaterial change, that these are now to do for their daughters what they once did for themselves.

What girl or woman, we want to know, is to blame for falling into the groove she finds provided for her? So profoundly do we believe in her activity, that we feel sure she would construct a groove if she did not find one to hand; but to arraign her for doing what she finds the whole world doing, would be, indeed, a monstrous injustice.

Yet, if somebody is not to be arraigned, the groove destroyed, and the entire system abolished in favour of another, how are we to have Mgr. Dupanloup's *Plan de la Vie*? How are we to have the two or three hours a day? How the *femme essentielle*, *femme agréable*, and *femme d'esprit*, constituting that exquisite unit, *la femme distinguée*? We are to have them, but—though he does not say so—his plan of life must commence when commencement is possible. We must begin with the girl, not with the woman—with the maiden, and not with the wife. There is no such virtue in the marriage-service as will suddenly transform a person alienated by long and systematic habit from studious pursuits, into a person regularly and by preference addicted to them for two or three hours a day; or as will recommend a serious scheme of existence to the favourable consideration of one whose only view of it has hitherto been to extract as much amusement and excitement from it as possible. A spontaneous transformation of this nature is not to be hoped for, and where are

we now to look for the force which could possibly compel it? Compulsion—gentle compulsion—must begin earlier. Then, the whole tenor of a young girl's existence and avocations must be changed? Undoubtedly. No more late balls? Certainly not. No more being out of bed after midnight? Again, certainly not. No more getting up at any hour? No. No more idle mornings; no more mornings devoted even to strolls or shopping? No, no; as our worthy Bishop would say, a thousand times no. No more love-making and marriage then? Not at all. Quite as much of these two good things as ever; if anything, rather more. But how? We will answer the question in our next essay, for to many people we are sure we shall seem to have raised a difficulty that we shall find it quite impossible to meet.





GIRLS' LIVES.

NOBODY will dissent from the assertion made in our last essay—that if, in accordance with the urgent recommendations of the Bishop of Orleans, women are to devote two or three hours a day with obstinate regularity to the private improvement of their minds, they must commence doing so long before they are married. Neither have we any fear that people who have a practical acquaintance with the subject will challenge our further proposition—that in order to cultivate such a habit during the years which immediately precede matrimony, they will have to make all their other habits materially different from what they are at present. As matters stand, there comes a period in the life of a young girl at which, in vulgar estimation as well as in vulgar parlance, her education is regarded as finished; and the duties which are then supposed to devolve upon her are the duties of neglecting no grace and losing no opportunity calculated to provide her with a husband be-

fitting her position. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the nature of these duties. Are they not written in every visiting-book, and in the heart of every truly feminine young person in the kingdom? It is enough to say that they have nothing in common with secluded and studious hours, that they are fundamentally antagonistic to them, and that they occupy, on an average, from four to five years in the life of nine girls out of ten. What, then, is to be done? Which idea of duty is to be discarded? The duty of cultivating oneself, or the duty of cultivating what are believed to be the best chances of finding the "other dearer self-in-self"? If this were really the dilemma in which a consideration of Mgr. Dupanloup's views inevitably landed us, we are quite sure that an overwhelming majority would refuse to entertain them. An uncompromising moralist would no doubt prefer the first alternative, and would give his vote for abolishing wives and mothers altogether, rather than not have them after the pattern of his deliberate choice. The world is not, however, as yet governed by uncompromising moralists; and it is absolutely certain that unless people can be persuaded that such a total change of habits and customs, both domestic and social, as would be entailed by the acceptance of the French Bishop's plan of life, is nevertheless perfectly compatible with just as much marrying and giving in marriage as there is at present, that change

has not a ghost of a chance of being accepted. Happily, we think we can show that its acceptance would not interfere with matrimony at all. More than that. We are convinced that it would promote it far more than it is promoted by the methods now so much in vogue.

We wish to shirk none of the difficulties which may appear incident to the contemplated Revolution. If girls between the age of eighteen and twenty-three are to devote a solid portion of their time to self-cultivation, they must do so systematically, and with inexorable regularity, or they will not do so at all. In fact, they must do what everybody does who is in earnest. The obligation to study two or three hours a day must be considered just as binding and unavoidable as the obligation of a barrister to go to his chambers, of a merchant to be at his office, an artist in his studio, or a doctor to visit his patients. Nothing must be allowed to interfere with it. It follows that the two or three hours—let us call them two hours and a half, not to be over-exacting—must be fixed hours. Now when, in the case of people who do not go to chambers or offices, but remain at home, can hours be fixed with the least inconvenience, and with the most absolute certitude? Unquestionably, in the morning. The morning ends at half-past one, at the latest. Supposing that the two hours and a half ended at the same time, they would commence.

at eleven. But it must be remembered that it is of the very essence of this scheme that girls, before marriage, should have the same habits as they are to have after it. Therefore, some time must be devoted to a participation, at least, in household cares and management, which a wise mother will on no account withhold from her daughters. This duty naturally arises at any early period of the day; and for this part of the plan to be satisfactorily carried out, breakfast at nine o'clock is indispensable. Rising at half-past seven, or at the latest at eight, follows as a matter of course; and there is not a doctor in the kingdom who would not tell us that young people who rise at half-past seven must, if their health is to be considered—and fancy a plan of life in which health was disregarded!—be in bed not later than half-past eleven. They must therefore retire at eleven. What will Society say to that proposition, particularly if it is to be—as it is—a law of the Medes and Persians? Why, that Society must be completely disorganised. Precisely: but only as a preliminary to being re-organised.

As far as we have yet gone, we have got rid of Society altogether between eleven o'clock at night and half-past one in the day. During that time we remain strictly in the bosom of the family, and we allow of no one's coming to break upon its privacy. After that, people may be as sociable as they please;

and, if they have only yielded absolute submission to the regulation just discussed, we defy them to waste much time during the remainder of the day. Shopping—a most incumbent duty, even when reduced to its proper proportions—exercise, visits, letter-writing, &c., will absorb a goodly part of many afternoons; and, though it is by no means desirable to see young women accomplished politicians, a perusal of what is worth reading in a daily paper (not always a very laborious task) will yield them both entertainment and instruction. But it is not practicable to lay down any absolute rule as to what is to be done between luncheon and dinner. Let people please themselves. This, at least, is very sure—that those who have spent such a morning as has been described will not be difficult to please. It is your creature that has done nothing all the morning that is at a loss what to do in the afternoon. The afternoon will provide occupations for itself; and these, of course, will vary materially from day to day. There remains, then, but the evening, consisting of dinner, and as many hours after it as may happen to bring us to eleven o'clock, or somewhat earlier, supposing that guests are in question who have to be home by that time. Society, as at present constituted, would, of course, shrug its shoulders, and declare its incapacity to do anything with the meagre number of minutes allotted to it. Society cannot

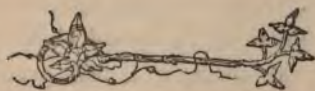
dine, for instance, before eight o'clock. But then it must be remembered, that Society has no intention of getting up at that hour to-morrow morning, and our hypothetical young ladies have. Suppose that we dine about half-past six? Suppose, in case we live in the country, that somebody—now a male, now a female, somebody—comes and stays two or three days, or longer, bringing the same good habits of respect for the hours of the morning that are found to prevail in the establishment visited? Suppose there are afternoon expeditions, evening strolls or rides, twilight strolls,—for the matter of that, moonlight strolls? Liberty may, it is found, be extended to the studious and the earnest, which wisdom will refuse to the idle and the frivolous. With such manners and customs prevailing, the country parts of England would again be peopled, and at that time of the year when they most easily lend themselves to such pleasant and profitable pursuits. For it would be preposterous to argue that London balls and nocturnal gatherings promote the real confluence of souls so surely, to say nothing of so satisfactorily, as the little incidents to which we have alluded. When once there were no more balls and nocturnal gatherings in London, we question if many people would care to go there very often who were not compelled, and we are quite sure that none would go for a permanency at a time of year when every natural in-

ducement points elsewhere. Two things make and maintain that unnatural monstrosity—the London Season. These are, the passion for gregariousness which devours all indolent and frivolous persons, and the dull belief that it is the only way of getting girls married. If people would only cease to be indolent and frivolous—in other words, if they would only accept Mgr. Dupanloup's plan of life—they would be cured of their ludicrous, bovine gregariousness; and, in taking the steps which would cure them, they would find young men and women considerably more prone to marrying than they are now. A great many men nowadays do not care to get married, because there are always lots of fellows at the Club and lots of girls in the Park, or at the "Zoo," or elsewhere, to help them to kill their time. How to kill time is the problem and pursuit of their lives. When they begin to find it more difficult to kill than ever, then they marry. A girl, with habits such as those we have described, would marry no such miserable creature. She would as soon think of marrying a swineherd. Men would then be forced to fit themselves to become companions for life to *femmes distinguées*, who, it will be remembered, are to be, according to the Bishop's definition, both practical, studious, and agreeable. For it must not be supposed that we are not keenly alive to the fact, that men want changing in these respects quite as much as women. Only men

in the mass will never take the trouble to change themselves until it becomes evident to them that, unless they do so, women will not look at them. As long as to be rich, handsome, well-dressed, fashionable, are the best passports to woman's favour, most men will care to be rich, handsome, well-dressed, fashionable, more than anything else, and to the neglect of anything else. Women must commence the Revolution for us; and that is why Mgr. Dupanloup is so wise in addressing himself to them. Studious and earnest men will never of themselves make studious and earnest women; inasmuch as even studious and earnest men can be attracted by qualities in women very different from studiousness and earnestness. But, happily, women are differently constituted; and a really studious and earnest woman would never be attracted by a fool or a fribble. In fact, she could not tolerate him for a moment; whereas it is a notorious fact that the most intellectual of mankind can be caught, cajoled, and almost ruined by mere heartless coquettes. Merlin and Vivien afford a common type of what happens every day. Change the habits of women, and you necessarily change those of men. Change those of men, and women may remain wholly unaffected. If women were simple, studious, and domestic, men would be, or would try to be, simple, studious, domestic. Are balls got up for the benefit of men? Are all the empty, expensive follies of the

London Season got up for the benefit of men? Industrious mornings and curtailed evenings would not drive them from female society; for, in plain language, nothing would.

It may seem strange, but it is nevertheless true, that women may venture on becoming sensible and truly accomplished without losing masculine homage. Moreover, the homage would not be quite so barren as it often is at present. Industrious mornings and curtailed evenings would prove to be marvellously economical. A father would spend much less, under such a system, in getting his daughters married, than he spends under the present one in trying to get them married. He might divide the money thus saved among them. That, too, would be no bar to matrimony. A young man's substance would be saved at the same time, and with a similar result. Indolence and frivolity are the causes of extravagance, and extravagance is the cause of celibacy. Herein lies the whole Marriage Question.





CUBS.

WHEN a word is not already of universal acceptance, it is not unreasonable to ask from those who employ it something like a clear statement of its meaning. Nevertheless, we shall not commence this paper with a definition of the word "Cub." Some of our readers, we imagine, will not require it; and we trust that the rest will, without it, obtain a fair notion of this half human sub-species before we arrive at the end of our remarks. As so often happens, the *solvitur ambulando* process will come to our aid. We shall get rid of any initial difficulty as we proceed.

In a state of society like the present, which prides itself upon having got rid of aristocratic exclusiveness, Cubs may, in the very nature of things, be encountered under every conceivable circumstance. At dinner, at the opera, at a ball, even at a Drawing-room, you cannot promise yourself any immunity from their presence, or indeed their close prox-

imity. As we shall see, it is of the very essence of Cubs, as of fools, to rush in where their opposites would hesitate to tread, or at least to do so without urgent invitation. But since the very dread of meeting them, together with other drawbacks, perhaps deters several people from any longer indulging in similar entertainments, it will be necessary, in order that everybody should recognise the creature who is the subject of our present speculations, that we should regard him under conditions in which nobody can by any possibility have failed once or twice to come across him. Highly civilised and perhaps morbidly sensitive hermits are one of the signs of the times. In America, we all know, the men of the best minds wholly abstain from politics. Similarly, in England, the men of best manners are beginning to show a disinclination for general society. "All are not fit," as Byron says, "to war and cope"—with Cubs. But even polished recluses must now and then travel; and as there are commonly six and sometimes eight seats in a railway carriage, he cannot himself occupy them all. It is just possible that all the other five or seven may be seized upon by a company of Cubs. The creatures are exceedingly gregarious, and not infrequently move about in considerable force. Indeed, it is rather a rare occurrence to meet with a perfectly solitary Cub; and when you do, you will not fail to perceive that loneliness has for the time

robbed him of half his nature, which requires congenial encouragement for its complete display. More usually, Cubs are to be met with at stations in twos and threes, particularly on Saturday afternoons, or when there are any races going on along the line. But even on ordinary week-days they are common enough, especially in the early morning, and late in the afternoon, or towards evening. They seem to know each other very well. Whether they really entertain a profound contempt for each other we cannot say, though we strongly suspect they do not. At any rate, they are quite as familiar as if they did. It is agreeable to be able to hope that our suspicion on the above score is correct, for they will, on the smallest provocation, and sometimes without any at all, be almost as familiar with you as with each other. They ignore your presence as thoroughly as if they had been acquainted with it for twenty years. You might be their father, they will treat you with such want of respect. One of them will whistle in your face a discordant injunction to paddle your own canoe; whilst another, during the process of settling his luggage and utterly unsettling yours, will assure you in musical accents that his name is Champagne Charlie, and that he is game for anything. Should there be a third Cub present, he is bound to outdo the manly disregard of you already shown by the other two. "Who's afraid?" is the motto of Cubs.

The Cub who is civil, is lost; and the Cub who cannot be more uncivil than one of his fellows that has just perpetrated some commendable act of spirited effrontery forfeits several degrees of his position until he manages to recover them by a sudden stroke of insolent genius. Accordingly, the third Cub, whom we have supposed to be one of your fellow travellers, pulls a cigar-case—occasionally a meerschaum—out of his pocket, and asks you, in a careless, defiant sort of way if you object to smoking, sir? In all probability he no more wants to smoke than he wants to know if his smoking would be disagreeable to you. But he believes that smoking and putting the above question are equally “the thing;” and for “the thing,” or what he conceives to be such, the Cub *pur sang* entertains a respect which he feels for nothing else on earth.

And here we get at the real root of the Cub's whole conduct. He is not necessarily bad-hearted or even a bully. On the contrary, his very Cubbishness is a proof of his cowardice, and nine times out of ten he would try to be obliging if he were not afraid of doing so, and of losing caste by the attempt. Insolence is by no means his nature. It is only his habit, which he has acquired in order to preclude the terrible imputation of being servile. The Cub, as we plainly see, is never a gentleman, but he would vastly like to be one. He would make

any sacrifice in order to attain to that great end. His Cubbishness is little if anything more than a misdirected effort in that direction. It is his misfortune never to be able to forget that he was not born and bred to good manners. Still more unhappily, nobody has ever suggested to him that modesty and simplicity, coupled with unobtrusive deference to others, would gain for him the reputation he so ardently desires. Or if anybody has, it is some one whom, upon such matters, he does not regard as any authority. Probably his father and mother, who more than anybody or everybody else have to suffer from his Cubbishness, have told him as much over and over again; but for the former, as conscious of his defects of education and address, he has the most unmitigated contempt, and for the latter, as an inferior person, but still a person somehow belonging to him, he feels an affectionate and patronising pity. Clearly, to his mind at least, their views of social behaviour cannot be very valuable.

Now and then the travelling recluse of whom we have spoken may encounter the Cub in a railway carriage in company with his mother, whom it has been his misfortune to have to meet at the station and take home. He will then have the luxury of seeing the Cub's reading of the Fifth Commandment. The travelling Cub, encumbered with his mother, will want to know why on earth she goes about with

such a heap of luggage ; will insist upon her favourite packages, which she wishes to have in the carriage with her, being put into the van ; and will treat those which he condescendingly admits along with his own with marked indignity. He takes care to give her and the public to understand that he considers the having to take charge of her an awful nuisance, and that this sort of thing does not happen every day. Of course his fellow-Cubs avoid him for that afternoon, as though he had the plague. That he should be a little out of humour is but natural, for he feels thoroughly ashamed of himself. Unhappily he is not ashamed of his real fault. We may be quite sure that, on the following day, in order to make amends for his supposed one, he will be more outrageously Cubbish than ever, and that the female sex will be the special object of his want of attention. To tell the truth, all women, even on the most ordinary occasions, fare badly at the hands of the Cub. Of ladies he stands in secret dread. Their very presence disconcerts him. Ignorant how to pay them that chivalrous deference which is their pleasant prerogative, the Cub can only amaze them by his assumption, or amuse them by his sheepishness. Still every laddie has his lassie, and Cubs are not altogether without congenial female society. Into that sphere of their existence, however, we will not follow them.

Careful observation will show that we have not

been magnifying the characteristics of Cubs. Nor is it difficult to account for their existence. Indeed, we have already done so, at least by implication. Their development might have been foretold for an age in which fortune-making was to be the leading pursuit of humanity, and fortunes were to be made with marvellous rapidity. The sons of successful, or at any rate of succeeding men, are thrust into social prominence before they are duly qualified to be there. Hence, Cubs. They are aware of their inferiority in point of address, but they do not like to acknowledge it. The first step towards amending a fault is to confess it. This they will not do. They prefer to brave it out; and as there are so many of them, they encourage each other in the bravado. Not that this is the whole truth. As we have already said, they want to do "the right thing." They have wit enough to perceive that true gentlemen are always at their ease, and therefore they try to be so. But between being and trying to be at one's ease there is all the difference in the world. In fact, one precludes the other. Moreover, trying to do a thing supposes effort and a certain amount of violence. Hence Cubs are violent, noisy, obtrusive. In a word, they are always trying. Let us not be too hard upon them for their failure. It is something for them to have an ideal, even if they as yet persist in choosing the wrong way towards reaching it.



OUR COUNTRYMEN ABROAD.

THE idea lately thrown out by a French journal that English people travel abroad in order to wear out their old clothes is ingenious, but it can scarcely be accepted as an exhaustive explanation of certain sumptuary phenomena which now too frequently attend our countrymen on their continental travels. The author of the idea has relied too confidently on the supposition, which we must own contains some modicum of truth, that men and women are, in the nineteenth century, mainly indebted to tailors and modistes for social distinction; and a more familiar acquaintance with English people at home would have made him cautious in passing a sweeping judgment upon all English people alike when abroad. He would then have known that no two things in the whole world differ so much as Englishmen and Englishmen. Not having yet accepted the principles of 1789, nor having seen anything in the events which have succeeded that popular Continental He-

gira to induce us to believe, any more than we did before, that all men are equal, we consequently have not arrived even at that external democratic uniformity which is about all that has been attained in the matter by those who look back upon Danton and Robespierre as celestial Avatars. We can assure our facetious Parisian contemporary that English gentlemen and ladies are not yet perfectly extinct, though probably they are not so frequently to be seen in Paris, even in an Exhibition year, as they were in days when French society was more prolific in their analogues than it is under the *régime* of the *demi-monde* and the *Crédit Mobilier*. But, by that principle of variety which has still free scope on this side the Channel, people who are intensely vulgar are also common enough amongst us. It is not our fault if, when they obtain a holiday, they find Margate and Paris the most congenial localities for a fortnight's dissipation. We should be to blame, however, if we did not point out that individuals probably change their clothes just as little as Horace says they change their natures when they cross the sea. It might be witty, but it would not be true, to retort that in this case the clothes must necessarily be old; which is the very substance of the charge brought by the *Figaro*. The offending costumes in question may very likely be perfectly new, and are such as, perhaps, a gentleman might wear in the Pass of Killie-

crankie or by the Falls of Lodore. He would not appear in them in Bond-street or at Her Majesty's Theatre; and the same reason which would deter him from doing so would act equally forcibly to prevent him from wearing them on the Boulevard des Italiens, or at the Vaudeville. No such motive would sway the individual complained of by the Parisian critic. The explanation in his case, however, is not that the clothes are old, but that the man is new.

Having once firmly grasped this elementary truth, we shall encounter no further difficulty in dealing with the alleged and, we fear, undeniable phenomena. English travellers unquestionably do appear in foreign cities in costumes which are a rank outrage upon the eyes, and therefore upon the feelings, of the community. The numbers of those who do so are probably on the increase, whilst the numbers of those who do not are not only comparatively, but absolutely diminishing. It is a mistake to suppose that the English who frequented the Continent before the invention of the locomotive, and the totally different social habits and arrangement of classes which its discovery and application have brought about, were mostly rich people; and that now, by the aid of railways, persons of smaller means are enabled to travel than could formerly do so. Almost precisely the reverse is the truth. A certain number of solidly

wealthy people used once in their lives, or even periodically, to visit the Continent; and these same people have not abandoned the habit. But the bulk of our countrymen and their families who were to be seen in foreign cities thirty years ago, or even less, were persons of small means. Now, indeed, they would be considered miserably poor. But they were persons possessed of leisure, whom no motive of financial gain compelled to move about quickly, or to get their travels over by a certain fixed day. Their lives consisted very largely of cultivated idleness. They were not very industrious or speculative, but at any rate they knew how to behave themselves. They liked the Continent because it was quiet, and because it was cheap. A kind of life was there obtainable at once elegant and economical, which was more or less denied them at home. To persons of refined tastes, but small and inelastic incomes, free picture-galleries and libraries in the morning, military music provided gratuitously in the afternoon, an agreeable climate during the greater part, and fowls at sixpence-halfpenny apiece during the whole of the year, composed strong inducements to submit to temporary, or even permanent, exile from their native country. Railways have changed the world in rather a startling manner for these indolent and graceful exiles. The galleries and museums still remain open; but railways have deluged them with

rapidly-itinerant Britons in thick boots, of boundless curiosity, but equally boundless and thoroughly well-satisfied ignorance, whose want of acquaintance with the language makes answers in it perfectly unintelligible to them, though, strangely enough, it does not deter them from putting equally unintelligible questions. Fowls, likewise, are yet to be had, but at about fifteen francs the couple; and everything else, by the levelling action of railways, has risen in proportion. Idleness may still be cultivated abroad, but it is rapidly becoming just as expensive an amusement there as it is in England.

It will be seen at a glance that the same causes which have been in operation to expel leisured, but anything rather than rich, Englishmen from the Continent, bring their busy and rapidly-increasing wealthy countrymen in shoals to supply their place. To the travellers whose chief peculiarity we have said was cultivated indolence have succeeded those whose salient characteristic is a vulgar activity. Calm grace is foreign to the natures and the habits of these people, and they cannot be quiet even when they have got nothing to do. A holiday cannot be turned by them to purposes of genuine repose; and it is all the more strongly marked by fuss and restlessness, because, probably, it is a short one. It is not money they want, but time. The *Figaro* may be certain that many of them could afford to have

a new suit of clothes every Sunday morning, on which special day, as the same observant paper may have remarked, they are always decently dressed even abroad, partly because, from having at home a certain amount of compulsory leisure thereon, they have acquired the habit of paying more rigid attention to their exterior on that day than usual. We do not mean to say that this explains their week-day outrages upon decency whilst away from England. But a reference to the principle which we have laid down will provide us with every possible explanation that can be required. If it still be asked why they cannot always dress and conduct themselves in foreign streets and public places as they would in England, we reply that there is a visible, intelligible, and authoritative standard to which they endeavour to conform in the one case, which is mostly if not entirely wanting in the other. In England they try to copy their social superiors, thinking it more probable that they will thereby be mistaken for such persons' equals than they would be by daring to disregard their example. It is quite possible that their praiseworthy imitation may be wholly unsuccessful, but it is also possible that it may go very near to completely resembling the original. It is this hope which at home insures something like obedience in externals to the mandates of higher taste and opinion.

But abroad the inducement is wanting. The travellers of whom we write are birds of passage, and they could not hope even to seem to be at home during the brief period of time which they could give to the effort. Despairing to conciliate, they think it wise to defy. Ignorant of the prevailing customs, they evidently prefer to appear to despise them. It is more agreeable to them to be offensive by a coarse contrast than to be made to feel humiliated by a fine one. Moreover, there is a tendency in men as in plants, to run back to their original wild condition when the artificial pressure is removed. Perhaps the *Figaro* is not aware that when the season is over, and those who rule our costume in England have left town, a series of operas is frequently given, which those who remain are allured to attend, not only by reduced prices, but by the notification that "evening dress will not be insisted on." This, if duly pondered over, will not only largely assist in solving the problem we have been discussing, but will also suggest why civilisation is invariably imperilled by the over-hasty emancipation or sudden emergence of inferior classes. These avail themselves of their liberty to resume their original habits and want of cultivation. It would be hopeless to endeavour to suggest a remedy for this state of things. It must be left to time, which "at last sets all things even." As we have already hinted, it is some consolation to feel

that if Paris is, by reason of its nearness, the greatest sufferer from the bad manners of some of our countrymen, it is becoming acquainted with them at a time when its own social condition entitles it considerably less than of old to be critical.





THE PLEASURES OF DESPONDENCY.

DAMPBELL made sure of a cordial reception for the poem by which he is most generally known, when he bestowed on it the title of *The Pleasures of Hope*. The name is unquestionably seductive; and there are passages in it which are as certain of immortality as *Hamlet*, *The Essay on Man*, or the last two Cantos of *Childe Harold*. Yet the discriminating and unbiassed critic, much as he may admire portions of the work, and strongly as he must commend the classic form and spirit of the whole of it, cannot avoid the conclusion that by far the greater number of its couplets rise but little, if at all, above elegant mediocrity. It is this general quality, rather than its occasionally real sublimity, which has won for it so large a share of public appreciation. Almost everybody—for, as we shall shortly see, to omit the “almost” would be to overstate the proposition—indulges in the pleasures of hope. Without being able to concede that the practice is universal, we may safely say that it is as general as any other

mental habit that can be named. Now the idea has become familiar to all except extremely stupid people, that our appreciation of a poet depends upon the extent to which he embodies our own feelings. And as almost everybody hopes, and a good many people are quite incapable of doing anything else, it follows that almost everybody will have a certain amount of liking for Campbell's *chef-d'œuvre*, and some people will entertain for it an admiration which they can genuinely feel for no other work of human genius. Assuredly, the name was a lucky hit.

Our wonder is, therefore, very great that in an age when authors are for ever racking their brains for captivating titles to their productions, nobody should as yet have written a poem on the Pleasures of Despondency. Hopes and fears have long stood in proverbial juxtaposition; and there is nothing in the psychical constitution of man or woman to prevent the most sanguine of them from suffering from occasional fits of depression. Even notably hopeful temperaments would be caught by the author in their moments of weakness; whilst a by no means inconsiderable class would always be ready to listen to their luxurious miseries embodied in mellifluous verse. We fling the idea on the poetical market, trusting that some one or other of the many middle-aged gentlemen who are at present occupied in the manufacture of verse for English drawing-rooms will

avail themselves of our disinterested suggestions, and that we shall ere long have a lugubrious little volume on "The Pleasures of Despondency," printed on lovely paper, enclosed in a fantastic binding redolent of genius and originality, and illustrated by half-a-dozen of our pre-Raphaelite artists, who have been of late so scurvily treated by continental opinion as expressed at Paris. Meanwhile, we must content ourselves with a few desultory remarks on the subject in unpretending prose. Should they be capable of being turned to a higher purpose by any one of the inspired bards just spoken of, we beg to say that they are completely at his service.

One of the first things that strikes us in connection with Despondency is, that it saves the person who cultivates it an infinite amount of trouble. There are a few hopeful people who are invincibly lazy; but, as a rule, the truly sanguine individual is possessed of painfully morbid energy. Working begets hope, and hope begets working again. The man pursues shadows, and swiftly as one escapes him another crosses his path. Now the tranquillity of the truly despondent person is vexed by no such phantasms. No mirage has power to befool him. He knows that the prospect which an ill-regulated mind would find pleasing and alluring is a mirage and nothing more. But the desert is an undeniable reality, and in the desert is his joy. That there is

no oasis as far as his eye can reach not only affords him no pain, but he has a positive satisfaction in feeling convinced that, even could he see twice or ten times as far, there would still be none worth mentioning. Under these circumstances it is quite intelligible that he should refuse to exert himself. Byron asserts that the keenest pangs of the wretched are as nothing compared with "the waste of feelings unemployed." Doubtless the remark is true; but the feelings of the despondent person are not in that painful predicament. Physically, he is unoccupied enough, but mentally he is just as active as the most sanguine temperament that ever exhausted itself in hunting butterflies. Like the well-known parrot, he does not say much, but he is a tremendous hand at thinking. "What is the use?" is his motto; and he passes his life in compassionating the weary chase of those who imagine that there will be anything to show at the end of it. They are the performers in the drama of life, and he is a spectator. He is obliged to them for their somersaults, and other fantastic tricks. They do nothing but return to the springboard from which they took their jump, whilst he remains on his inelastic seat, without, however, having ever given himself the trouble to quit it. He knows that he cannot mend his condition, and all the prospect in which he can possibly indulge is a sort of hopeful despondency that it will gradually get

worse. He is quite prepared for that contingency; and as it is morally sure to happen, there is no chance of his being called upon to endure the pangs of an agreeable disappointment.

So far we have been considering the Pleasures of Despondency that can be enjoyed by a person by simply attending to his own state and outlook. It is obvious that, thus limited, the pleasures must be of rather a negative order. Some philosophers have maintained that pleasure is at best but a negative quality, being nothing more than the absence of pain. We cannot quite agree with them, though it is clear that, according to their definition, the despondent person who desponds only about himself must lead a life of exclusive pleasure. But we are not content with this limited view. The Pleasures of Despondency may be active as well as passive. The transition from one to the other takes place when we for a time transfer our regard from ourselves to our neighbours, and instead of desponding about our own concerns, we fall into a fit of profound and delicious despondency about theirs. That there is something not altogether disagreeable to us in the misfortunes of our friends was long since asserted, and has been universally accepted as true. But the assertion does not presuppose that we have cultivated the Pleasures of Despondency. Only introduce that missing element into the calculation,

and the misfortunes of our friends, instead of being not altogether disagreeable, become positively and altogether agreeable. Our vanity is gratified by our habitual prophecies having become true, and our normal temperament is indulged in the contemplation of its choicest phenomena. Such a pleasure cannot be denied the epithet of active. Nor, if we sedulously cultivate a despondent habit of mind, can even the successes of our friends balk us of our pleasure. If they are fortunate at present, we have the pleasure of feeling certain that their good fortune cannot possibly last; and when misery does really come upon them, even then our fund of enjoyment is not exhausted. Bad as their plight may be, Despondency will whisper to us the pleasurable reflection that they have not yet seen the worst. Not only is there active comfort in the knowledge that all that is bright must fade, but further unction is distilled from the corollary that shade has an inevitable tendency to become shadier. Even death does not baffle the despondent mind. Perhaps the very highest form of pleasurable despondency is that experienced by the happy temperament which sees in the majority of its acquaintances nothing but souls undergoing the probation of earthly miseries previously to the final state of enduring perdition. The highest pleasures of hope, we are quite sure, are a trifle to this. That a complete condition of un-

alleviated misery can last for ever is, of course, quite as natural as that even partial happiness cannot. Indeed it is only when such a man has brought himself to that frame of mind in which he can honestly say, "Misery, be thou my happiness!" that he can be said to be in full harmony with his ideal of existence. He holds that men are not forbidden to be happy; they are simply warned against adopting wrong means for attaining their end. Hope is a snare of the devil, and a pitfall of hell. He is resolute to seize the truth—enough for us to know that Despondency alone is happiness below. In all probability, he thinks that the same Divine law will rule above. Despondency, purified from any tinge of wicked and carnal Hope, is evidently the loftiest condition to which we are called, and will ultimately be our exceeding great reward, provided, of course, that we have been sufficiently despondent in this valley of tears. Never-ending weeks of Scotch Sabbaths are the immortal reward to which he will look forward. Were it possible to conceive that anything less was in store for such men, we feel convinced that there would be a second protest against Divine ordinances, and that with a cry of "*Ah! l'heureux temps quand j'étais si malheureux,*" each rebellious spirit would have to be expelled from the realms of bliss, to enjoy elsewhere the much intenser Pleasures of Despondency.



DRESSY MEN.

NOTWITHSTANDING the apparently well-authenticated proclivity of utterly unreclaimed savages for articles of personal finery, it may be doubted if men generally, even in a state of complete barbarism, have any serious passion for self-adornment. The delight of M. Du Chaillu's old friend in Ashango Land when arrayed in the habiliments of a London beadle, though exceptionally comic, is but one of many recorded instances of the gratitude of the lower races of mankind to the higher, for loading them with the gewgaws which the latter are in the habit of regarding as supremely ridiculous. Still the motive for gratitude requires elucidation. It is open to question whether, even with us, it is the dress that throws ridicule on the beadle, or the beadle that throws ridicule on the dress. The law of association works not only in very wonderful but in very arbitrary ways. A hundred years hence, a *Mode Illustrée* of 1868 will probably be considered quite as comic a publication

as a volume of *Punch* of the same period, unless it so happen that, after various transformations of style, fashion has by that time returned to something like the same condition in which it finds itself at present. Is it not just possible that we invariably associate costume with its wearers? As Nature has kindly exempted us from ever harbouring the suspicion that we ourselves are ridiculous, we necessarily perceive no particular absurdity in those who closely resemble us. But a striking consequence flows from this reflection. It is this: that the people whom we find most absurd are by no means those who the most deviate from our own pattern. Quite the contrary. The Parisian woman who wears a fashionable bonnet sees nothing absurd in an Apulian woman who wears none at all, in the Tuscan who wears only a *fazzoletto*, or in the Andalusian who still prefers a *mantilla*. The person she laughs at is the provincial of her own or of a neighbouring country, who still adheres to the bonnet which she herself discarded, perhaps only a twelvemonth ago. We invariably find the toga becoming, not only because we associate it with Athens and Rome, but because we ourselves have never had anything at all akin to it. The nearest approach to it in modern costume is a bedgown, probably the most ludicrous of all hitherto discovered modes of apparel; yet it requires no extraordinary talent for arranging drapery for a man suddenly to

produce a classical effect with it which will show how the step from the ridiculous to the sublime is quite as short as that from the sublime to the ridiculous. Nothing is absurd, save by comparison with something else which we consider to be essentially not so. Wearing no cloaks at all, and influenced by the principle of *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, the savage finds any clothes sublime, particularly such as those which adorn a beadle, if he can only meet with anybody, like M. Du Chaillu, of sufficient gravity to offer them to him. Similarly the civilised Londoner, just because he always does wear clothes, and a particular cut of them, can be convulsed with laughter by one of our accomplished comedians appearing on the stage in a tattered or peculiar suit, though he sees nothing to laugh at and a good deal to admire in the Red Indian who wears nothing but war-paint. The passion of the savage for European garments is not for them as garments or even as finery, but for that which will the most rapidly assimilate him to persons whom he sees to be more powerful and important than himself. He wants to rise in his own self-esteem and in the esteem of his dependents; and if a swallow-tail coat with brass buttons, even without the nether garments which usually accompany that habiliment, exalt him in their eyes and in his own, it is not surprising that neither he nor they should see the joke practised upon him by his liberal benefactor. All of

which seems to raise the suspicion that, even among the most unsophisticated savages, a passion for dress and finery, merely as such and apart from any other motive, is not so real as is commonly supposed.

Still the fact remains, even should wild men in the woods be shown to be really without the decorative tendencies which are commonly ascribed to them, that certain tame men in the streets betray an inordinate appetite for adorning their persons to the very best of their ability, and often far beyond the scope of their means. We have no wish to dispute a statement so obviously true; but we think that the foregoing remarks will enable us to deal with the fact in a more accurate spirit, and to give to it a classification which we otherwise might have found some difficulty in assigning to it. Had we started by saying that dressy men are an isolated fact, the truth of the assertion would probably have been challenged, and their close affinity with the woolly-headed nigger, arrayed in the newly-arrived finery of some cunning European trader, would have been rudely insisted on. We are happy to be able, on the strength of our opening paragraph, to acquit the Dressy Man from the imputation of a relationship to which he might perhaps object. He has nothing in common, we beg to urge, with the noble savage. The latter, if left to his own bare instincts, does not dress at all; and when he does, it is for an ulterior object—that of

being or seeming to be something like the European. Now, our Dressy Man is always dressed. Furthermore, it is inconceivable that he ever should have been without dress; and the well-established fact, that, on his first appearance in the world, he was without it, only affords a conclusive argument in favour of that particular school of metaphysicians who maintain that inconceivability is no test of what is or can be. But from the moment that he was able to conquer the original misfortune of not being in full dress, it is quite impossible to suppose that he was ever guilty of backsliding. Not that he is stationary in the matter. He is always making greater and still greater efforts to approach to his ideal of excellence. He has taken for his motto a slightly altered version of a famous couplet of Pope :

“Hope springs eternal 'neath the human vest;
Man never is, but always to be, dressed.”

He is constantly endeavouring to surpass himself and leave himself behind. Dress is his being's end and aim. When a would-be facetious contemporary made a Dressy Man reply to the query of a friend, how he contrived always to have his scarfs so exquisitely arranged, “Well, you see I devote my entire time to them,” it missed making a joke because it stated a very plain truth. The Dressy Man does and must devote his whole life to dressing himself. *Ars longa*

vita brevis. A scarf takes no end of arranging, and an afternoon is gone before you know where you are. The Dressy Man is an artist, and the artist is, we all know, a slave to his art. He needs must be, if he is to succeed. He must live laborious days if he is to see his boots, like the periods of the great masters of style, polished *usque ad unguem*—to their very tips. He is no miserable amateur, no desultory *dilettante*. Far from having a soul above buttons, he is heart and soul in them. It is fatal to a man to be “above” his work. The remark is true of the pleader, the advocate, the preacher, the politician. Most of all is it true of the Dressy Man. Like a sentinel he must for ever be at his post, without the slightest hope of being relieved. No one can do his work for him. He must watch the changes of fashion as narrowly and as persistently as a captain of a ship the variations of the heavens, or as Admiral Fitzroy’s successors the wayward oscillations of the barometer. Nor can it be denied that his fidelity to his self-chosen task is beyond all praise. He is the most conscientious of craftsmen. Moreover, he is the most open-minded of mankind. More liberal sentiments than his could not exist. There is not an atom of bigotry or obstructiveness in his composition. He welcomes change for change’s sake, and as a positive good in itself. Like the enterprising British manufacturer, who is said still to be able to control the markets of the world simply by

his readiness to pronounce the machinery of yesterday perfectly worthless to-day if some fresh invention shall have been perfected in the interim, the Dressy Man is prepared at a moment's notice to empty his precious and all but perfectly new wardrobe into the old clothes' basket as soon as ever he hears of any novelty or innovation in the objects for which he exists. He never stops to ask himself if he can pay for them. The Dressy Man who hesitates is lost. He cannot afford to be economical. Spending is his trade, or rather, let us say, his profession. Palissy the potter burnt his wife's bedstead from under her, and even threw her wedding-ring into the crucible, in order to procure the heat and the colouring required for his enamels. The Dressy Man does no less. Usually he has no wife. But he has a father, an uncle, aunts, expectations, and such-like sources of wealth; and all these he chivalrously and recklessly uses in order to attain perfection in procuring the shapes and colours demanded in his art. Bernard de Palissy has been exalted as a hero. And no one has as yet thought of proclaiming the Dressy Man a martyr to his convictions! It is the old story of there being two measures.

The cause of this injustice on the part of mankind, however, is not far to seek. The Dressy Man dresses for himself and for dressing's sake, and from pure unadulterated love of his art, whereas men like

Palissy work for other people. Verily they have their reward. But who rewards the Dressy Man? Nobody. Too often, we are ashamed to say, he is allowed to experience the bitter experiences of the Insolvent Debtors' Court. However, Dress, like Virtue, is its own reward. "But come what may," says the Giaour, "I *have* been blest." "Come what may, I *have* been dressed," may the poor captive broken-down Dressy Man exclaim. And then consider the purity of his motives! The recollection may well console him in distress. Other men may have dressed, or tried to dress, for a brief period, in order to gain some mean object—to please a sister, silence a mother, propitiate a cousin, or win a wife. But the *bonâ-fide* Dressy Man knows nothing of such secondary motives. He is a guardian, a trustee, of good dressing, who must do his duty at all sacrifices. As for a wife, he never dreams of such a thing. Dress is already his wife, his sweet mistress, his everything. A wife, in the ordinary sense of the word, he could not afford, for in that case he would have to give up dressing. He would be obliged to abandon his profession, and to throw up his career. He is much too honourable and resolute to do anything of the kind. Besides, a man, says the old song, should be off with the old love before he is on with the new. But "Bondstreet holds his heart and soul." And so in single dressy blessedness he remains to the last. He is the

delight of men's eyes and the joy of his own life. He instructs his generation in the great art of personal adornment. He is a sort of peripatetic fresco. Move to him, and deferentially too, but do not attempt to stop him. He is not great in discourse. He has too much to think about. He dresses. Is not that enough?





FOLLOWERS OF FASHION.

A FEW years ago a cry of lamentation went through the land, bewailing the final extinction of all originality, the growth of servility, and the triumph of commonplace. We had all become a *servum pecus*. We were all leaping over the same stile. Men were running, not even after their own shadows, but after their neighbours'. We looked at each other, took stock of what we saw, and then went and did likewise. What everybody was doing, everybody else—if we may be pardoned the useful bull—was considered bound to do. "Everybody" was guide, philosopher, and friend. There was no god but Everybody, and Everybody was its own prophet. We were all being turned out after the same pattern, all cast in the same mould, all made up of the same mind. What everybody thought, everybody was obliged to think, and what everybody was seeing or saying, everybody was obliged to see and say. We were birds of a feather, and flocked together,

and some even went so far as to say that the ornithological species we represented was that of geese, and exceedingly tame ones.

We believe that two distinguished men were mainly accountable for this jeremiad, which still continues at intervals to be sung amongst us. Baron Bunsen struck the note first, and then Mr. John Stuart Mill took it up, and wrote his suggestive *Essay on Liberty* in the key which it had indicated. One of the most powerful arguments, perhaps, that could have been adduced in favour of the truth of the alarming allegation was, that everybody at once read the essay in question, and that everybody or nearly everybody agreed with it. Mr. Mill, indeed, might have turned round on any individual—could such at the time have been found—who happened to differ from him, and forcibly pleaded that so accurate was his theory that everybody was thinking alike, that he could actually get nobody to disagree with him; so thoroughly the public seemed to have lost the very power of dissent. True is it, moreover, that almost every book still meets either with utter neglect or with universal acclamation. The pastry-cook's or a fourth edition, is the lot of a new novel. Moderate successes—what the French call *succès d'estime*—are now almost unknown. Either a *succès fou* or a *non succès*—complete damnation or absolute apotheosis—is all that is open to a man. It is with

the stage as with literature. Either the curtain falls, seldom to rise again on the same piece, or the fortunate drama has a run of a length equal to that of the *Arabian Nights*; whilst a new play is either at once withdrawn, or the town is deluged with placards, mural and peripatetic, announcing to millions that it is the very greatest success the world has ever seen, and that everybody is going to see it, and that until you have seen it you will be good enough to consider yourself as nobody, and an outcast from social life.

So far, we may seem to be only heaping up fresh arguments in favour of a view which we hold to be by no means so true as is still generally supposed; and the very name prefixed to this paper would at first sight appear to point in the same direction. What more striking indication could there be of the prevailing servility of mankind, than the fact that the "followers of fashion" are so numerous? But it seems to be forgotten that if there exist followers of fashion, there necessarily must be leaders of fashion. Slightly varying the wording, without at all altering the meaning or truth of Dogberry's well-known words, we may say, "if two men ride on a horse, one must ride *before*." To follow a fashion may be a proof of servility, and of a commonplace turn of mind; but to invent a fashion surely shows originality and independence. If there really be

such things as fashions—and nobody doubts it—somebody or other, and in fact many somebodies, must bring them into favour. Again, nothing is said to be so fickle, and so shifting, as fashion. Usually, before we have time to say “Look there!” darkness and second-rate neighbourhoods have devoured it up. “It comes, it goes, like the simoom, that harbinger,” not, of course, of gloom, but of joy. We were fortunate enough to be in a fashionable milliner’s, only yesterday, and overheard the great *artiste* of the establishment imploring her customers to order nothing for the present; “Wait, madame!” she exclaimed, “wait a week, a fortnight, perhaps, and then we shall see our way more clearly. We are in a period of transition, and know not what the future may bring forth!” In a fortnight the town will be in possession of—say a new style of cape. In another, it will have gone down to the tomb of all the Capulets. One moment and there comes upon the horizon a bonnet no bigger than a man’s hand—scarcely so big; another, and the whole social empyrean is covered with bonnets precisely similar. A moment more, *fruit Ilium*; small bonnets are things of the past. All this, we urge, points not to servility, but to surprising inventiveness. Fashion cannot possibly be changing so often, unless there be not only an enormous rage for change, but an extensive capacity for satisfying it. And then it is

not every attempted innovation that succeeds. By the great law of natural selection, many fashions must be struck down in the universal struggle for momentary existence. We know how numerous are the fashions that succeed; but think of the fashions that fail! Their unnamed name must be legion. Perhaps, *nous ne sommes pas si bêtes que nous en avons l'air*. We are not so servile as we seem. The real truth is, that when a certain fashion has, to use a "fashionable" phrase, "come in," it is not easy to procure anything else, and most assuredly it is exceedingly expensive to do so. A stern law of political economy settles that matter. It is cheaper to buy and wear what everybody is buying and wearing, rather than to insist on indulging one's own whim; for the simple reason that it costs less to provide an article for the million than for the individual. A thousand petticoats, or a hundred thousand hats, of a superior texture can be manufactured more economically, if they are all alike, than half their number, if each petticoat or each hat is to be dissimilar in order to meet personal fancy. Many a man would be out of the fashion if he could only afford it. Of women we will not speak so positively.

But in order to prove, beyond possibility of doubt, that servile imitation, and a mere echoing of each other are not really the prevailing faults of this

generation, we would ask if there ever was a time when people differed from each other more largely, and more determinedly, in matters of importance, than they do at present. Are we all of one mind on political questions? Were we ever before of so many minds on religious ones? We are much nearer chaos than a common consent. Here no law of political economy steps in to compel us to agree. We may gratify our differences, without having to pay heavily for the indulgence. We are not attacked in purse for a theological bias, as we should be for a particular cut of boots. There is as yet no tax on political eccentricity, and accordingly we have plenty of it; but he who will wear a coat of his own must pay for the gratification of his taste. We believe that this is precisely as it should be. Pressure towards conformity is felt where it should be felt, and is not felt where pressure would be most harmful. In matters of real importance a man cannot be too independent. In matters of no importance at all he cannot well be too subservient. In matters of opinion, every individual's own view ought to meet with reasonable deference from the public. In those of dress, the individual ought, consistently with convenience, to defer to the public. He who never follows a fashion will probably never lead one. Conformity often shows only good sense and good breeding. People who pride themselves upon being

dissentients on every possible occasion may perhaps become notorious, but will scarcely become respected. A man who has got nothing better to do than rail at fashion, however conceited he may be, could probably do nothing better than follow it. The followers of fashion are not great geniuses, but they are, usually, agreeable citizens. They certainly do not deserve to be abused for their modesty.





CIVILITY AND SELF-INTEREST.

WHEN ardent believers in the perfectibility of mankind are pressed for some justification of their amiable creed, they usually point to the more tolerant spirit and milder manners which the march of the centuries has brought along with it. Not only, they allege, do churches and governments no longer persecute those whom they fail to convince, but, in the private relations of life, men are more forbearing and courteous towards each other than in olden times. It would be impossible to deny that, as far as appearances are concerned, such a change has really taken place; but we fear there will be but little difficulty in showing that this improvement in reciprocal human gentleness is more apparent than real. Could it be proved that men loved each other more, and were more ready to forgive each other than formerly, the case no doubt would be satisfactorily made out. So long, however, as there are good grounds for believing that whatever amelioration has occurred is

due rather to a shrewd tenderness for self than to any increased consideration for others, the creed in question must continue to be regarded as more pious than plausible.

Historically speaking, the world has been favoured with two great and opposing doctrines, as to how injuries are to be encountered, and to what extent personal animosities are to be indulged. One may be roughly stated as the pagan doctrine, and the other as the Christian one. Both are exceedingly simple and exceedingly absolute. According to the former, a wrong must never be endured, and an enemy must be made, sooner or later, to rue the day that he showed himself in his true colours. The nobler form of paganism never went further than to discountenance delay or dissimulation. All that it inculcated was, to strike back at once and in the light of day—but always to strike. A more ignominious form of it recommended caution and a prudent selection of opportunity, but never oblivion. It was permissible to dissemble, but not permanently to overlook or ignore. To forgive would never have been construed as anything else than poverty of spirit and lack of virtue. Christianity, on the other hand, has preached a diametrically opposite doctrine. Feelings of vindictiveness, or even of dislike, must, according to it, be rigidly repressed, and injuries, no matter how great or how lasting, must be pardoned

at once and for ever. Revenge, either open or covert, is absolutely prohibited; and if, in the offices of charity, preference be given to one individual rather than to another, it should be shown to the wrongdoer instead of to the benefactor.

Nothing can be more certain than that, in practice, modern society has rejected both these doctrines. It has done so, however, not because it honestly considers either one or the other to be essentially erroneous, but because it finds both to be exceedingly inconvenient. Whilst limited to the ventilation of theories, it professes a decided preference for the Christian view, with certain modifications; but, in conduct, it inclines to the course inculcated by pagan ethics, and to the baser aspect of it which combines patience with implacability. A man must be very simple or very unobservant who can go extensively into modern society, and fail to be struck with the personal animosities which, despite a smooth and friendly exterior, haunt and torment its inmost heart. Could some visitant from another planet be all at once introduced into the midst of us, his first impression would in all probability be exceedingly favourable. He would see no scowling faces, no lowering brows, no averted eyes; would hear no rude language and no harsh word of threat or defiance. He would remark that everybody knew everybody else, or was anxious to do so, and that a

frank cordiality coloured almost all our salutations. A little more familiarity with our *vie intime* would lead him to revise this his first conclusion. He would find that people who had just shaken hands with customary fervour were already occupied in depreciating each other's merits, and that apparently the most amicable relations were not at all incompatible with reciprocal criticism of an exceedingly hostile kind. Still, it would be some time before he began to suspect the existence of anything like positive detestation. His second impression would be, that we were not quite so fond of each other as our manners had at first led him to imagine, but he would not yet arrive at any more cruel suspicion than that a good many of us rather disliked each other than otherwise. But closer intimacy would assure him that casual but continually-repeated comments of an injurious character conveyed in reality something far more deeply rooted than superficial and unaccountable dislike. He would have at length to explain the phenomena by assuming the presence of settled animosities. Once unwillingly led to this unpleasant conclusion, he would have no difficulty in discovering both the reason of their existence and of his having been blind to them for so long a time.

He would find the reason, in each case, to be precisely the same. The self-interest which, in the crowded and clashing walks of modern life, makes

men so antagonistic and objectionable to each other, also causes them to be so uniformly civil. Had they, to speak in proper language, good, solid grounds for feeling genuine and feverish hatred, they would probably find it impossible to dissemble it. But it is partly because they have no such grounds, and because they would be unable to justify their animosity were they openly to avow it, that they gratify it in a covert and desultory fashion. If one had time to probe all those petty modern malignities which expend themselves in shrugs, and sneers, and monosyllables, one would find, nine times out of ten, that the people in question had never once, really and of malice prepense, attempted to do each other an ill turn. One would invariably find, however, that they were people who stood in each other's way, accidentally but unavoidably crossed each other's path, and habitually interfered with each other's light. In a word, the self-same interests made them detestable to one another. But it will not make them uncivil. Quite the reverse. The very fact that they are constantly meeting, have regularly to confer with the same individuals, have to move in the same society, dine at the same houses, pray in the same churches, join in the same amusements, and perhaps marry into the very same families, binds them over to courtesy. In a more primitive form of civilisation, the discovery that their interests were essentially and un-

alterably opposed would operate to draw them into visibly distinct camps, and open hatred and undisguised hostility would be the result. But in the crowded and complicated conditions of contemporary existence, the identical causes which serve their interests compel them to be the closest of neighbours, and link them together by the odious chain of inevitable vicinity. Politicians must needs be in habitual intercourse with politicians; literary men cannot possibly avoid coming in constant contact with literary men; artists are everlastingly running against artists; and it is no exaggeration to say, that barristers spend more than half their working life in the company of barristers. To some extent convenience, to a very considerable extent absolute necessity, keeps them for ever within one circle, from which one would imagine that, as a mere matter of taste, they would be most anxious to escape. Clubs shed a flood of light on the point. We have military clubs, political clubs, literary clubs, university clubs, artistic clubs. Usually, a man belongs to at least one other club besides the one to which he is associated by reason of his particular avocation; some club of a neutral or purely social character. Nevertheless, it will commonly be found that the one he habitually frequents, and where his acquaintances invariably count on finding him, is the one whose name represents his own individual line of life. It

is true that there, perhaps, he meets the one or two real trustworthy friends that he possesses ; but there, likewise, is it that his enemies most do congregate, and where that much larger band, his polite acquaintances, who look upon him as their enemy, are daily and nightly to be encountered. But what can he do ? He can no more stay away from it than an advocate can stay away from court, a cornet from parade, a curate from the Sunday-school, or a painter from a Royal Academy dinner. He must frequent it, and, frequenting it, he must force himself to be civil. At the neutral club, he probably does not know more than one man in ten, and those he does know he knows but slightly, and has not a word to say against any of them. Were he to prefer it to the other, he would enjoy the independent sensation of not being obliged to waste many words upon his neighbours, and the few he did exchange with them would be not only courteous but sincere. But he has no alternative. A good deal of "business" is transacted in an indirect sort of a way in all those informal gatherings which are held in what are popularly supposed to be places of recreation. Anybody's experience will enable him to point out very able men who have, more or less, and in some instances wholly, failed in their careers, simply by not fore-gathering with their professional congeners. Usually they are proud sensitive men who adopt this course.

The slander, depreciation, tittle-tattle, envy, and all uncharitableness, are abhorrent to them ; and accordingly, they hold aloof from the society and discourse of those who, in the natural course of things, would be peculiarly their fellows. This holding aloof is of itself an incivility, as matters go nowadays, and a considerable sacrifice of their own interests is the consequence. Genuine philosophic toleration of obnoxious individuals may, possibly, be a fine trait, but when it is based upon no higher motive than the love of gain and the furtherance of one's own personal objects, it may, perhaps, still deserve the title of philosophic, but scarcely commends itself with particular force to the admiration of the moralist, or to the charitable faith of the enthusiastic believer in modern progress.





GRACIOUSNESS.

NAD good fairies not been relegated to the dim domains of early history by a pitiless criticism, and were there the smallest hope that one of them would appear in Mayfair and offer to its maidens the choice of some super-excellent gift, we should strongly urge upon them the selection, before every other, of that of Graciousness. To its natural or acquired possession many men and nearly all women are indebted for what success they have in life. We do not deny that several prominent male characters in history have obtained both enormous power and enduring fame without it. Still it would be easy to show that, so far as the former is concerned, their hold of it would have been surer had they not made it, by insolent or even neglectful manners, repellent to everybody around them. Could Caius Marcius have been but tolerably gracious he would have been known to posterity by a more honourable title than that of Coriolanus. How suddenly Shakespeare

seizes upon the leading trait in his character and the mainspring of his perdition, by making the very first words he utters on the stage blunt and offensive! Nowise propitiated by the "Hail, noble Marcius!" addressed to him by Menenius Agrippa, he can find no gentler words to commence discourse with than :

"Thanks! What's the matter, you dissentious rogues,
That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion,
Make yourselves scabs?"

Who is not thus at once prepared for the fate which he ultimately meets with from the Volscians, when he has made Rome too hot to hold him, and for the line spoken and acted on by all the conspirators?—

"Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him!"

Had Julius Cæsar possessed the affability of Octavius, he would have united in his own person the fortunes that were divided between the two, and would have enjoyed the honours of the Imperial purple instead of undergoing a fatal penalty for having merely wished for them. A Cæsar of later times contrived to fight his way fairly enough to a throne, which he lost by want of graciousness both of mind and manner, and which another Augustus, recovering more by fraud than force, has managed to retain, largely in consequence of an affability so subtle that even his ordinary taciturnity has not damaged or diminished its

charm. A long roll of conspicuous men could be adduced to prove that nothing but gigantic powers can ever insure the triumph of individuals who are deficient in the attribute of which we are writing; that even these, when successful, arrive somewhat tardily at the end desired; and that they can never feel certain, even to the last, that their conquest is a secure one. With equal ease could it be shown that very inferior men have won superior positions by little more than the prodigal use of this one allurements. When born to power, no creatures are too poor to retain it, if they only be gracious.

We would rather, however, divert the inquiry from characters purely historical or public to that private world where we all, avowedly or secretly, desire to hold some prominent position and exercise some personal influence before we die. The assertion made at the commencement of our remarks so completely holds good in the more modest sphere to which we will direct our attention, that we need not re-state it. "What a good fellow!" is a phrase more descriptive of a man's social position and influence than any other words, however many or minute, could give us. It simply means that the man is gracious. For it must not be supposed that, in order to be so, he must be finikin, full of smiles, suave, a master of elegant deportment. Not in the least. He may stand six foot four in his stockings,

be broad-chested, loud-lunged, and even clumsy. For all that, he may be exceeding gracious. It is not the strongest men who inspire the most fear, nor the most burly who are the roughest to rub against. Contact with them may possibly be both soft and pleasant. A man who wishes to be gentle invariably is so, and seems all the gentler to other people in proportion as he unavoidably conveys to them a consciousness of his strength. Indeed a man whose violence would not be terrible, or who is so insignificant that his rudeness would scarcely be offensive, will not obtain all the credit for graciousness which, if he happens to possess it, he really merits. Men, whether weak or strong, may get on in a rough-and-tumble sort of fashion without it. But if they be the former, they will be paid off at every turn for their neglect of it; and if the latter, they will be pursued by the more malignant and patient of those whom they have hurt, and are pretty sure in the long-run to meet with their deserts. Enemies, either open or covert, they must have; and it will be strange indeed if one cannot be found from among them all to settle the wrongs of the rest. The old scores may stand a long time, but they are wiped off at last—perhaps at the very last. Instances must be familiar to everyone, of men who seemed to be making the running almost to the very end, but who at the final hurdle of all were toppled over. “Some

enemy hath done this," the man may exclaim; and he will probably be right. The enemy is very likely somebody whose very existence he has forgotten.

If this be true of the sex which, in spite of certain reformers, we shall still take the liberty of calling the stronger one, how much more applicable must its teachings and its warnings be to the weaker! We have said that even those to whom it is given to act *fortiter in re* ultimately come to grief if they forget the remainder of the injunction. How, then, must it fare with those to whom *suaviter in modo* is the only part of it with which they can possibly comply? Men, as we have seen, in vain make the running who disregard it. Women who do so make no way at all. A woman is nothing if not gracious. Liberally endowed with graciousness, she can dispense with nearly every other qualification. She shall be plain—verily, she shall be ugly—provided she be supereminently gracious; and men will actually forgive, and as Pope says of vice, shall end by embracing her. It is in vain that sour fortune shall have brought her into the world penniless and with fiery red hair. She has the magic ring about her somewhere, and it will be used as a wedding one if she thinks proper. Should she be comely no less than gracious, she is a conquering heroine, come when she will. All men who have not yet donned sweet fetters will want to wear hers. They will offer

her their devotion, and will be more devoted to her than ever when she has graciously excused herself from accepting it. She will be welcome in every house, for she will graciously declare it to be perfect, and her presence will make it appear so to its possessor. She transforms geese into swans wherever she goes. She will tell the invalid that he is looking so much better, and the poor cripple will walk awhile without his customary crutch. To age she will tell the cheery falsehood that it is looking as young as ever, and bring back pleasant blushes to its cheek as though it were but yesterday turned eighteen. She will praise the taste and the style of a poorer and plainer sister's dress, and hint that she is getting prettier and prettier every day of the week. Had she given her a hundred pounds she could not have made her a tithe so happy. No cook can spoil a dinner where she sits down a guest. *Ab ovo usque ad mala*, from the soup to the salad, she declares that everything is delicious; and did she drink wine, she would smack her pretty lips and vow that "Gladstone's sherry" was worthy of the cellar of a Metternich. We were wrong in what we said at first. Good fairies are not yet extinct. She defies historical as well as all other criticism, and is herself the good fairy, carrying and scattering gifts at every step. Even a modern satirist, putting his cruel epigrams aside, whilst just such a one flits across his

darkened page, enthusiastically, but, as it seems to us, not extravagantly, calls her

“The wandering sunshine of the country side.”

It may be pleaded that graciousness, in its extreme manifestations, is rarely accompanied by certain other and more sterling qualities, and is very often alloyed with considerable insincerity. We think that this last and more serious accusation cannot be borne out. To attempt to make things agreeable, when without the attempt they would scarcely be so, seems to us to deserve a very different epithet from that of deceitful. To tell a person who is feeling and looking ill that he is looking quite well, when the effect will probably be at any rate to make him feel better, is, no doubt, to say what is false, but comes under the head of Horace's *splendide mendax*. To assist a person's imagination by drawing somewhat upon your own is, surely, under such circumstances, not only an excusable, but a benevolent operation. To be pleased with everything arises from a desire to be pleasing to everybody; and, though it may not be a very lofty, it is an amiable, and surely no dishonourable, ambition. Between graciousness and flattery there is all the difference in the world. The one consciously tries to befool, in order to gain an advantage. The other half unconsciously befools, in order to confer one. Thus under-

stood, graciousness must share with cheerfulness the proud claim to be considered the highest form of social charity. Would to heaven there were more such gracious liars! It is poor comfort when you are out of elbows, to have the hole pointed out; or to be honestly informed, when you are just recovering from a dangerous illness, that you look as if you were about to die. All of us may possess considerable power if we will only condescend to please; and such pleasure as habitual graciousness bestows may legitimately be conferred by the most conscientious of mankind. It is churlishness, not sincerity, which makes so many people withhold it. Whether those who are most gracious usually have all other good qualities we do not care to inquire. If they possess the one virtue of graciousness we will readily pardon them the want of every other.





MONASTERIES IN THE MARKET.

IN an age when the assertion that Supply is equal to Demand is put forward as a fundamental social law, possessing all the sanctity of a revealed gospel and of a saving doctrine, nothing can well be regarded as a more conclusive sign of the times than advertisements in the public journals. That anybody should want to double-up his perambulator may appear to the majority of mankind an exceedingly grotesque supposition ; and the inquiry whether he should like to have luxurious hair must needs sound to a man endowed with a due sense of personal dignity as an outrageous impertinence. Still the very offer to supply these things is a proof that a demand for them exists. There are people, strange as it may seem, who do want a sound, wholesome, dinner sherry, at twelve shillings a dozen, bottles included, though every decent man must necessarily hope that they are not among his list of acquaintances, and there are women who do want a “zephyrina, or winged jupon.” Advertisements are there to prove it.

Such being the case, we wonder what the British public will think of the following advertisement, which has recently appeared in the supplemental sheet of the *Times* :

HERTS.—To be SOLD, by Private Contract, a RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY, freehold and free of great tithe, formerly monastic, suitable for and readily convertible to its ancient uses. It has convenient railway access to London, and is beautifully situate in the midst of pleasure grounds and gardens, ornamentally intersected by a river ; the whole containing, with the paddock, about seven acres.

It is conclusively clear from this announcement that Residential Properties for monastic uses are in considerable demand ; and here is supply, as a matter of course, rushing into the market to meet the requirement. To a traveller acquainted with the interminable forests of shaggy Lavernia, the snow-suckled torrents that alone break the religious silence of the Sagro Eremo, or the heaven-topped summit whence Monte Cassino looks down upon half a peninsula, the offer of this little cenobitical box, with its “beautifully-situate seven acres and convenient railway access to London,” may at first raise a scarcely complimentary smile. But the proverb which enjoins us to cut our coat according to our cloth warns us against being too exacting either as to the position or the extent of the property so obligingly offered for monastic uses. As Mr. Mill and Mr. Bright forget, the supply of land in this country is limited ; and the

best-intentioned philanthropist can no more provide new orders of monks with it *ad libitum* than he can peasant proprietors. The important point to be noted is not that so little is offered, but that any is offered at all. Statistics already made abundantly public, and notorious facts with which everybody is familiar, amply testify not only that Roman Catholic monasteries for both sexes are rapidly on the increase in this country, but that a craving for monasticism has entered the hearts of several who would on no account owe any of their inspirations to the Church of Rome. Nor need they feel at all indebted to that source for their newly-adopted passion. Helyot, deceived by Eusebius, refers the origin of monasticism to the solitaries known as Therapeuts, who settled at a primitive period on the shores of the Lake Mareotis; but the account given of them by Philo conclusively shows them to have been Jews; and a very slight acquaintance with Oriental forms of religion is enough to satisfy us that monachism is very nearly as old as human nature itself. Many heedless people have imagined that, whenever it may have first obtruded itself on the world, its soul at any rate is now finally extinct. Roaring Philistines who love to mouth such high-sounding phrases as the spirit of the age, the principle of progress, and the enlightenment of the nineteenth century, have gone about reiterating the allegation that monasticism cannot possibly live in our

modern atmosphere ; and chirruping little coteries, that fancy themselves perfect conclaves of wisdom, have repeated the same conceit in milder and prettier little phrases of their own. As usual, facts rudely upset the theories of people who really are not entitled, in any accurate sense, to express opinions at all. Monasteries are being suppressed by force in certain countries, just as they were suppressed by force in England more than three hundred years ago. But wherever force is withheld, and they are allowed to establish themselves, the fact is, whether we like it or not, that they are springing up with amazing rapidity. Liberty is supposed to be the cardinal principle of the nineteenth century ; and if it is to be maintained, the enlightenment of this much-belauded epoch, far from being opposed to monasticism, bids fair to be distinguished by its revival.

Every thoughtful mind would be not only very much surprised, but very much puzzled, were it otherwise. Nearly all the causes which led to the growth and development of Christian monasteries at least, are once more in full swing amongst us, however cunningly disguised under new forms. Fear, disgust, and mysticism formerly drove thousands into retreat from the world, and will most assuredly drive them thither again, unless law intervenes to stop them, or the most salient phenomena of the age are by the age itself suppressed. Overt violence no

longer infests the earth as it did in the days when timid women, and still more timorous men, took refuge within cloistral walls; but covert violence, which invisibly compels poor, and therefore unprotected, people to do the things they would not, walks the world, and urges the shrinking to crave for cover from a tyranny against which there is no appeal. The struggle for existence has become so fierce and unfaltering, and drives those who would not succumb in it to such dirty shifts, that the more scrupulous combatants inwardly pray to be carried altogether out of the field. Life is now again, as in the most fierce period of the early Middle Ages, a free fight; and people who have not the instincts and tastes of *condottieri*, and neither courage nor strength to hold their own, are fain to turn for succour to deep solitudes and awful cells. But it is not the fearful alone, any more than it was only they in former times, who are tempted to go in search of seclusion. Once more disgust is playing a large part in urging men away from scenes in which they have had such bitter experiences. There is no word but "loathing" to express the sense which hundreds of men and women, now living, entertain for the age and the so-called civilisation with its bitter exigencies. That shoals of the oppressed and the offended should fly to a lodge in some vast wilderness would seem to be the inevitable course. But physical obstacles bar the way.

Where is the vast wilderness to be found? The Psalmist's words must be inverted, for the places are full of people that once were solitary; and all that the most enterprising caterer for souls sick of society can offer, is a residential property "beautifully situate" in a beggarly paddock of seven acres, with convenient railway access to London! Shade of St. Jerome! has it come to this? Worse off even than the man in Martial's epigram, who could live neither with his mistress nor without her, people overwhelmed with dread or loathing of the world can neither live in it nor contrive to get out of it.

We have named mysticism as one of the causes that originally promoted monastic life, and that is likely to coöperate in restoring it. People who are not content with plain, downright Christianity, yet who fly from Rationalism as from the pest, must perforce take refuge in some form of mysticism. We must, however, allow that modern mysticism is a very hybrid sort of affair, perpetually striving after impracticable compromises and the reconciliation of fundamental contradictions; trying to serve two masters, and yet making out that it is serving only one; exulting in a great parade of spiritual qualities, yet refusing to break with material advantages, and finding expression in one form or other of the cosmopolitan religious jargon of the day. It is to catch the eye of this class that the advertisement we have

quoted was inserted in the *Times*. The residential property would suit them exactly, however unfitted it may appear for the wants of anybody less mystical. Their love of compromise, and of liberal transaction between facts and consciences, would surely be charmed with a monastic solitude consisting of only seven acres, and a renunciation of the world under circumstances that provide convenient railway access to London.

The subject is too large a one to be treated exhaustively within narrow limits. There is one cause at work which we have not considered at all—we refer to our surplus female population. When our drawing-rooms are swarming with wall-flowers, and our thoroughfares with something infinitely more melancholy still, he is a bold prophet who declares that the day for nunneries is gone for ever. We ourselves are very far from admiring that particular solution; but we should be extremely obliged to the civilisation which has created the difficulty if it will be kind enough to find another. If it is not quick about it, there are a good many people who will be sure to think any solution better than none. And the conventual solution is evidently ready at hand. If not, why the above advertisement?



MODERN EXTRAVAGANCE.

WE have in another Essay dwelt upon the exorbitant love of sumptuary display which is so conspicuous a characteristic of the present age, and at the same time to point out that there is not the slightest chance of its suffering any intrinsic diminution by reason of recent financial events. Indulgence in it may have experienced a temporary check, credit being for the moment as deficient as substantial means; but, inasmuch as the passion was not excited by the mere belief in the existence of boundless wealth, the discovery that there is a limit not only to wealth but also to wealth's convenient substitute, is not likely to abate it. It has its roots in deeper mould of human nature than the mere golden drift which the speculative current of our time has brought along with it. This rank mania for material ostentation is, in reality, no genuinely new plant, introduced by, and springing up from, recently superimposed soil, but the oldest and commonest in the

world, whose foliage alone has lately undergone modification in certain parts of the globe, owing to its now having in those places to struggle to the light under somewhat altered conditions. It is nothing more than that old passion, love of superiority, otherwise love of self, the elastic mainspring of human action, that rejoices to disport itself in so many various movements, but all of which would be suddenly stopped if the one great central energy were to cease. Why, in our generation, it is showing itself almost exclusively in extravagantly sumptuary parade is a point well worth considering. When we have done so, we shall then be in a position to pronounce whether—to use the language of Mr. Darwin—this new variety of the love of self has attained its complete development, and whether it is likely to be permanently domesticated amongst us.

Strange, and even paradoxical, as the assertion will perhaps sound to some people, to the triumphs of the Spirit of Democracy must the marked contemporaneous rivalry in material parade be mainly attributed. Republican simplicity, and aristocratic ostentation, are no longer anything but phrases, and we very much doubt if they ever were anything more. Americans may love to insist upon their ambassadors wearing black coats in places where a most natural distinction demands that they should wear something more ornamental, and may rejoice in calling their

chief magistrate "Mister," and treating him as though he were not entitled even to that modest appellation; but the outrageously vulgar craving for display to be seen in the principal American cities, and the ridiculous ostentation wherewith, in Europe, the citizens of the Great Republic attempt to surpass all native competitors, amply testify to their being the most ardent combatants in the struggle we are considering. It would be singular were it otherwise. As the original authors of the paradoxical doctrine that all men are equal, they are, by a natural Nemesis, compelled to outrage it more than any other people. Striving hard to make it seem true, by enforcing certain simulations of personal equality, they have to find compensations for the violence done, both to truth, and to their own immutable instincts. *Naturam expellas furcâ tamen usque recurret.* Self is not to be turned out of its own home by any amount of philosophical declarations. Not only is it preposterously untrue to assert that all men are born equal, but it is preposterously disingenuous to pretend that they will ever consent to be made so. It is an exceedingly simple matter to enact that nobody shall possess titles, which typify social superiority; but all the enactments in the world cannot prevent social superiority from existing, and social inferiority from prostrating itself before it. The worst of it is, however, that the various forms of supe-

riority, which enjoy a natural growth under a different system, can, under the artificial democratic one, be materially simplified. Law and custom combined can indeed do away with all of them, save one; but one will always refuse to be obliterated, just as matter, when reduced to its ultimate elements, will obstinately resist any further reduction. Deference may be denied to superior virtue, superior intellect, or even superior physical strength; but when all these have been improved off the face of society, all the more deference will have to be paid to superior wealth. A man who has written a great poem or a great philosophical work cannot insist upon being shown marked respect by his contemporaries; and if he happen, in a democratic age, to have run counter to the sentiments of the community, he certainly will not meet with it. But a man who has amassed, or even inherited, a huge fortune, will thus be all the more secure of at least general worship. He may be hated, he may be despised, but he will nevertheless enjoy that deference which is invariably paid by the majority to power. Somebody must be powerful, and if it is not to be either the man of strength, the man of genius, or the man of virtue, all of whose pretensions can be denied both with ease and impunity, it must perforce be the man of wealth, who thus remains master of the field. In all ages, physical

requirements being a part of our wants, a man with money must necessarily enjoy some little consideration ; but it is precisely because his importance can never be wholly done away with that it becomes outrageously supreme in an age when other avoidable distinctions have been artificially diminished or entirely cancelled. Him and his distinction you cannot cancel, save by taking away his riches ; since so long as you leave him his gold you must perforce leave him his flock of servile and interested retainers. The vast majority of mankind can get very tolerably through life without sharing in any appreciable degree in the direct products of intellectual or moral energy ; but in those of material energy they must either share or starve. Moreover, in an age when what is popularly called the spirit of equality, but what is more accurately described as the levelling spirit, is spreading with all the virulence of a genuine contagion, it is not surprising that its most active votaries should seek to compass their ends with the aid of ridicule. Accordingly it has become a favourite pastime to depreciate superior delicacy of conscience by calling it "want of backbone," and to dispose of superior refinement of intellect with the sweeping epithet of "priggishness." But superior depth of purse defies ridicule. It defies everything and everybody save the slave, the sycophant, and the robber. It is so easy to call a philosopher a fool in order to shelter

oneself from the imputation of being one, or to stigmatise a saint as a lunatic in order to make unscrupulousness and sanity appear synonymous. But what is the millionaire to be called? If, like the saint and the philosopher, he is to be turned to any useful purpose by the dexterous use of words, he must needs be called some very pretty names indeed—to his face at least. This is precisely what takes place. He is intrinsically powerful, and his power and superiority are overtly acknowledged and conciliated. So desirable a position will not lack general appreciation. Man is a competitive animal; and when society sets an additionally high premium on the successful pursuit of wealth by withdrawing the old prizes from every other kind of personal triumph, it seduces into that particular field ever more and more competitors. But these rivals, in order to make good their claims to the distinction to which they aspire, must perforce spend the money they make. Otherwise public opinion, that impartial judge, would possess no satisfactory proof that they had it. Even that form of demonstration is not conclusive until the test has been continued for a considerable time. The arena swarms with impostors; but as these only try to force the running, pace and not staying power being their *forte*, the result is that the *bonâ fide* competition is all the more intense. Every rich person tries to run every other rich person down. The means sug-

gest themselves. If A spends 25,000*l.* a year, hoping to cut a splendid figure, B has only to spend 50,000*l.* in order to make him cut a rather sorry one; and C, by spending 100,000*l.*, can reduce poor B to a similar plight. Clearly there is no limit to the noble contention that may be indulged in by the *superba civium potentiorum limina*, whose rivalry Horace must have had prophetically in view when he wrote the ode from which we quote.

It will perhaps occur to some of our readers that rich men, even in order to prove themselves rich, and to obtain the homage which that demonstration brings, need not spend their money on themselves and their households, but may devote it with public spirit to the adornment and glorification of the community in which they live. But the commonwealth has long ceased to be regarded, by rich men at least, with the proud and affectionate eyes they have for the diamonds of their wives, the horses of their daughters, or the powder of their footmen. Democracy, which we have to thank for the rabid race for wealth, will, we are sometimes assured, cure, or at least ennoble, the passion itself has induced, and once again make the State an object of pride and reverence. It is impossible not to perceive that the cure which Democracy will attempt to apply to the disease we have been considering will be more in harmony with its antecedents. We have said

that the only possible way of bringing a rich man down to the level of his neighbours is to take his money from him. This, Democracy, consistent in its hatred of all invidious distinctions, already shows symptoms of being inclined to do. It is beginning to be as tired of the superiority of the wealthy man as it has already shown itself of that of the intellectual and the independent man. These it has reduced to due insignificance by mere neglect; but the other will have to be reduced by force. Force, no doubt, will be employed, but always the force of law; for modern Democracy piques itself on legality. It is equity that it detests; equity permitting inequality. If large capitalists were to be deprived of their wealth, sumptuary parade would then be checked, and we should all be equal with a vengeance. "The world will then commence afresh," it may be said. Possibly. Possibly, too, however, it may be worn out. And even if it is not, will it consider it worth while to commence afresh, after having once experienced so ludicrous a disenchantment? People have grown so accustomed to see cosmos that they are incapable of conceiving chaos; and are so far removed from the beginning of civilisation that it never strikes them that in some countries they may possibly be near the end.



LOVE OF DISPLAY.

THE most salient peculiarity of the age is, beyond a doubt, an incurable mania for sumptuary display. Nothing so much strikes a cultivated Englishman, on re-visiting his native land after an absence of half a life spent in the Colonies or in some comparatively quiet part of the Continent, as the altered style in which the higher classes now live, move, and have their being. It may be open to question whether they are substantially richer; but there can be no question at all about their seeming to be at least ten times better off than they were thirty years ago. We believe the truth to be, that they sail ever so much nearer the wind, in the matter of expenditure, than their fathers would have dreamt of doing; a striking corroboration of our surmise being found in the fact that since the monetary crisis which commenced nearly two years ago, no less than sixteen hundred people, who previously returned themselves as liable to duty for the keeping of private carriages,

have notified to the tax-gatherer that they no longer possess that particular luxury. Anyone fairly acquainted with the general condition of English society will feel quite certain that these sixteen hundred cherished vehicles were not "put down," as the phrase is, without a pang, and till after desperate attempts to keep them up a little longer had wholly failed; nor shall we perhaps be very wide of the mark if we suspect that at least sixteen hundred more would follow them to the Baker-street Bazaar or the annexe of the Polytechnic, were it not that most people prefer to hold on to their former condition "by the skin of their teeth," rather than confess, by suppressing some of the outward trappings of their importance, that, like Dogberry, they have had losses. The same spirit of emulation which first drove them to invest in carriages and horses of their own when they could ill afford to do so, urges them to continue them now that they cannot afford it at all. The sixteen hundred persons represent only the very shakiest, those who were toppled over by the first puff of the financial blast. They suggest an indefinite number more of the tottering, who, though sturdily endeavouring to weather the storm, tremblingly exist on the very verge of overthrow and extinction. Could such a financial crisis as that through which we have recently passed, and whose grievous effects we are still experiencing,

have occurred half a century ago, it is quite certain that it would have brought in its train no such ignominious domestic phenomena. Men would have felt the strain in some shape; but we cannot believe that hundreds of people would have been compelled thereby to right themselves by changing for a time their whole style of living. This sailing close to the wind was utterly unknown to former generations, and would have been considered by them singularly discreditable. They were more cautious, and, it must be added, more conscientious. Families did not think of living up to their means, much less of living beyond them. Allowing for rainy days, which, if not of frequent occurrence or exceeding severity, they nevertheless regarded as sure to happen ever and anon, they made due provision for their advent. We, on the contrary, who live in an age of periodical financial storms, act as though eternal sunshine had settled on our heads, and a serene atmosphere had been assured to us by some new dispensation.

It is not necessary, however, to appeal to any more unpretending past in order to substantiate the charge against the glittering present; nor can it be evaded by any conventional reference to that popular comic character, the *laudator temporis acti*. Anybody who doubts if a reckless passion for show is now the chief sore of the English body social, be-

trays an incredulity which it would be waste of time to attempt to conquer, or a lack of experience whose place could not be supplied by any amount of argument. We have referred to only one of the phenomena of the disease; but we shall not have far to go to discover others. What is true of carriages and horses is true of every other commodity by an undue indulgence in which people strive to impress the public with a sense of their importance. Two years ago, the wages of domestic servants had risen to an exorbitant height; and, though the remuneration was thus extravagant, the demand remained greater than the supply. Good cooks were not to be had at any price; and cooks of any kind were not easy to find. Now, in common with their fellow domestics, they abound, and their object is not so much to get high wages as to obtain a place of some sort. As in the stable, so in the culinary department, expenditure had been strained to its furthest limits, and the slightest strain snapped it. The outcry against the enormous profits of retail tradesmen, with which the duller portions of the autumn and winter were enlivened, though just enough in itself, is another contribution to the establishment of our theory. People were so busy outshining each other, at table as well as in the public thoroughfares, that they had no time to see if they could not attain that noble ambition at a somewhat smaller cost. When the pinch came,

they turned round upon the people whom they had been encouraging to fleece them, but without any intention of abandoning the spirit of rivalry which made that process possible. They sought for immediate relief, not at all for permanent cure. It is quite right that the British spendthrift should reform his butcher's and grocer's bills, but it is ludicrous to suppose that his doing so will save him from the consequences of sumptuary excess. No amount of virtuous cheese-paring will pay for fundamentally vicious expenditure. Those, however, who imagine that the compulsory check placed upon extravagance by the crisis of 1866 will have any lasting effect are egregiously mistaken. It is not even a case of the devil being sick, and thinking for the moment that he would like to be a monk. If there is a pause in the spending of money just at present, it is not because the public have repented of their prodigality, but because they have no money to spend. The devil is so terribly ill that he is forced to be an anchorite in spite of himself; but far from being reconciled to his position, he is meanwhile consoling himself with the reflection how very little of a monk he will be when he is once well enough to get abroad again. Like drunkenness, a rage for competitive display, once acquired, is rarely extirpated. Indeed, it has one peculiarity worse and more fatal than inebriety, which is this—that it has not yet been ac-

knowledge by its patrons to be a vice at all. Overtrading has been indignantly denounced, and stones have been as liberally flung at limited liability companies as though glass-houses were wholly unknown amongst us; but we have not yet heard the inquiry mooted as to what made it worth people's while to overtrade or to trust in huge dividend-manufacturing associations, of which they either knew nothing or knew that they were organised swindles. Love of display was the efficient cause of both phenomena, and will cause them afresh, the very moment that the tables are fairly cleared and the game can be begun again. People enamoured of a contemptible end will reprobate worse than contemptible means only when the latter leaves them sprawling at the side of the road instead of carrying them to the end of their journey. Specious prospectuses, and promising risks, may just at present be at a discount; but we have yet to learn that purple and fine linen—finer than your neighbours' of course, or it is not fine at all; more carriages than people can possibly contrive to ride in, more servants than they can by any ingenuity find employment for, more dresses than they can make opportunities for parading—have been in any degree discredited by the various windings-up and goings through the Court with which short lives and merry ones have recently been brought to an edifying close. It would be a ludicrous error to

suppose that society has lost its zest for the good old amusements. The toys that pleased before would please still if they were forthcoming, and will infallibly please again the moment they are produced once more. If it be true that, just at the moment we write, *le jeu ne va plus*, it is because the players are suffering from a fit of temporary exhaustion. Give them time, and they will duly come forth like lions and unicorns refreshed, and soon be fighting up and down the town again. Existence would be intolerable without a fitting arena for the spirit of generous emulation. Rivalry is the salt of life, which without it would be utterly savourless. This, we may be quite sure, is the unabandoned doctrine even of those who are now most busily engaged in the work of retrenchment. Brandy and soda-water implies no renunciation of Veuve Clicquot. Restoratives are designed only to put the patient in a position to commit fresh excesses. The universal economy which we are just now witnessing is nothing more than a sort of economical pick-me-up, intended to enable the crapulous public to tide-over the depressing interval between one good financial debauch and another. For our part, we hope the interval will not be too long; for lost time will have to be made up for, and the next bout will be fast and furious in proportion as its commencement is forcibly delayed. The cause of this special modern madness

may possibly be worth considering on a future occasion; but for the present we confine ourselves to commenting on its wide-spread existence, and to warning over-sanguine moralists against imagining that the mania for show has received any genuine check from recent drastic events. "It's well for yer I'm in a state o' grace," said an Irishwoman, who had been confessing her sins of combativeness and receiving plenary absolution for them, yet who chanced to come plump upon her main enemy as she emerged from the chapel into the street; "but jist wait till I'm not in a state o' grace, and you'll see if I'll not be even wid yer yet." Society, in the matter of sumptuary display, is bound over, just at present, by even stronger ties, to decent behaviour; but the moment its anything but voluntary "state of grace" shall have passed away, it will be even with the restraint at present imposed on it by evanescent circumstances.





ON MARRYING AGAIN.

THERE is no subject upon which our most cherished prejudices and our tolerant common sense are more at issue than that of "marrying again." In spite of small sneers, employed chiefly for the purpose of keeping alive that feeble joke about an Asiatic mystery, it is quite clear to anybody who has studied the matter, that our most deeply-rooted sentiments and opinions are of Oriental origin; and though they have been toned down by travel further West, they still exist in all their primeval force in the East. We, therefore, cannot be surprised when we find the principle and practice of Suttee lurking in the hearts of the most progressive Europeans. Most men, and nearly all women, even amongst ourselves, are theoretically averse to the tears which are shed round the grave of a lost companion being succeeded by the smiles amidst which a newly-found one is necessarily led to the altar; yet few men, and no women, are disposed, unless the incident be ac-

accompanied by exceptionally heartless or indecent circumstances, to be hard upon the individuals who figure in so common a scene. The Western spirit of compromise, unknown in that East which some men regard as the home of barbarism, and some as the abode of eternal principles, is accountable for the phenomenon. Still, the fact that a second marriage is invariably regarded as a fair subject for a good deal of sly nudging, whispering, ridicule, and cynicism, is quite enough to prove that even we regard the proceeding as inevitable rather than as blameless. Laughter and a shrug of the shoulders are about the severest form of censure of which the indulgent moral sense of a high state of civilisation appears to be capable ; and this is the worst reprehension with which it now visits those who put off the sober livery of the widowed grub for the gaudy wings of the bridal butterfly.

As the softer sex is more interesting than the sterner, and as it is supposed to be better adapted for playing successively the various parts of mourning ; being bereaved, and being consoled ; we will consider the case of the unhappy woman who has just been robbed by an untimely fate of her husband. Her own opinion of course is, that she will never marry again, and that nobody on earth could induce her to do so. This, at first, is also the opinion, expressed at least, of her immediate friends and rela-

tions. The prophecy that she will have another husband before three years are over would be resented as an insult, and an insult of a peculiarly cruel character. Yet, in a vast proportion of cases, the prediction would be a true one, and those who most resented it would best know it to be so. Indeed, its sting lies in its truth. It is peculiarly a case in which it might be asserted that the greater the truth the greater the libel; and that is why no delicately-minded person would venture upon it prematurely. The person, however, who first takes courage to ventilate the subject, as soon as it may with propriety be alluded to, is regarded in the light of anything rather than of an enemy. He is a friend in need, and therefore a friend indeed. But the time must be discreetly chosen, and for this purpose the person most directly interested in the suggestion must be closely watched. A male friend—one, of course, who has himself no direct interest in it—is preferable for the delicate task; but males are proverbially such clumsy creatures, so deficient in tact, even when they are not wanting in considerateness, that it is only in very fortunate instances that a male friend is found to perform it. It usually devolves upon the women; and that amiable duplicity for which critics, by no means malevolent, have declared them to be so strikingly distinguished, easily enables them to accomplish the dainty duty with con-

summate dexterity. That they have hitherto unanimously agreed that the "poor dear" never by any possibility could or would marry again, does not in the smallest degree interfere with one of them some day indirectly manifesting a slight doubt upon the subject, or with the remainder being speedily infected with her sudden scepticism. As we have said, the choice of time is the main point. It must, on no account, precede or synchronise with the first symptoms of a possible change of mind on the part of a widow herself. If it does, she may be horrified or alarmed into repudiating the notion in the most absolute manner; and the consequence of such a fiasco will only be to make it difficult, if not impossible, to air the notion afresh; and, moreover, to perpetuate and strengthen the initial idea that a second marriage is not to be thought of long after the widow herself, in her inmost heart, has ceased to cherish it. Ordinarily speaking, this stumbling-block is avoided where female friends are loyally concerned in what they have now come to regard as the real interests of their patient. Supposing that they have made a discreet selection of the moment for changing their opinions, conclusive reasons for the change are not far to seek. If the interesting being in question be but indifferently provided for by the will of the dear departed, the arguments drawn from the indispensability in this sublunary sphere of material comforts

are of themselves sufficient to convince those who are only waiting to be convinced. Sometimes they are forcible enough to convince almost anybody. A woman who, in her married state, had her carriage, and, in her widowed one, is without it, is an object of sufficient commiseration for the purpose with a great number of people. If her descent in material well-being be still greater, and she has to remove from a handsome house in town, or in the country, to a small one at the sea-side, or, possibly, into lodgings, there are few individuals, unless they think that she ought to become a nun, who would declare themselves resolutely against her changing her melancholy condition. If she be young, youth affords an additional argument. Rich, independent, and able to surround herself at all times with female companions, she can well fight off the monotony of life and the practical difficulties of her position. But if she be poor, the case is wholly different. She can do little or nothing for herself, whilst swarms of the very people may be offering their services, whose services it would be most damaging to her reputation to accept. Her friends, who began by declaring that she never would and never could marry again, end by declaring that she *must* marry again. And it certainly is hard, so long as we reject the alternative of Suttee, to say that she must not. Indeed, to say so, is virtually to accept Suttee in

a disguised form, and closely resembles the policy of substituting penal servitude for life for capital punishment; the alteration being intended to save the feelings of the community rather than those of the real sufferer. Accordingly, we do away with it wholly, in practice; maintaining the theory only during that brief period after the husband's decease when there is no chance of its being violated, and satisfying our consciences when it is, by those well-known jokes and sardonic comments to which we have already alluded.

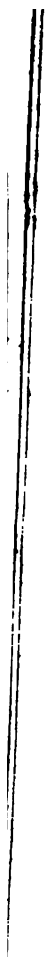
Nevertheless, we have no hesitation in saying that the conscience of that portion of mankind which is distinctly instructed in a moral law does really dislike second marriages. To marry again may be human; but not to do so would certainly be divine. Circumstance, so well called by Byron, "that unspiritual god," no doubt compels both widows and widowers to take a step which they must feel to be not a particularly lofty one; and the unanimous voice of the community condones their acquiescence in the stern conditions of life. But could the conditions be altered, or could individuals be found undauntedly pious enough—in the classical sense of that term—to resist them, even at their worst, and to remain as faithful to the dead as they were to the living, even human approbation would follow their magnanimity and fixity of soul. Of course, this

could be expected only when married life had been of so felicitous a kind as to render posthumous fidelity a sort of logical sequence. Many such unions, perhaps, there are not; and perhaps, also, that is the reason why public opinion is so extremely tolerant of fresh ones. But there always survives an ideal, even in the most realistic times; and perfect conjugal bliss has never ceased to be an object of contemplation and desire even by those who least obtain, and, perhaps, least deserve it. Should the time ever come when it will be a thing of common occurrence, it is not impossible that we may grow less indulgent of what we now more than tolerate, and shall expect two people to be united not only till death do them part, but for more than a conventional two or three years after it has done so.

THE END.

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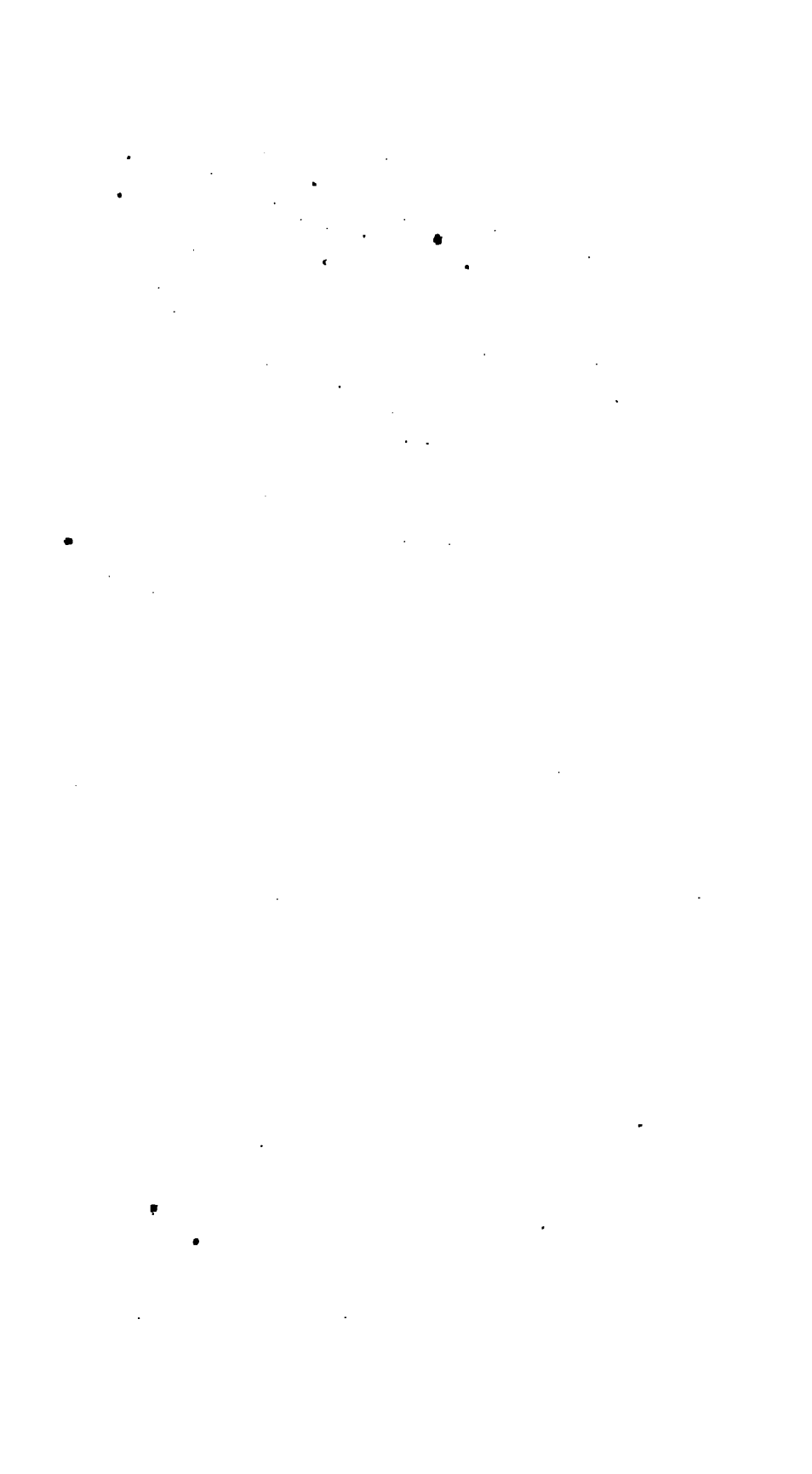
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